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U.S. Policy in Liberia, 103-2 Heari...

U.S. POLICY IN LIBERIA

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED THIRD CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

MAY 18, 1994

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

APR 14 1995

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U.S. POLICY IN LIBERIA

WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 1994

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 2:00 p.m. in room 2200, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Harry L. Johnston (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. JOHNSTON. It is 2 o'clock and I call the meeting to order.

This is a particularly appropriate time for the Subcommittee on Africa to consider the current situation in Liberia and U.S. policy toward this country's transition. I say this because the people of Liberia are standing at the crossroads and in recent weeks we have viewed two dramatic alternatives as to where this country might be headed.

I am referring to the historic elections in South Africa and the infamous genocide in Rwanda. Today Liberia is struggling to break loose from over 4 years of bloody civil war. Factional fighting has, indeed, left its mark. There are scores of refugees. Some factional fighting continues and the country's infrastructure is badly damaged. Worst of all, the level of mistrust is extremely high.

And yet there is also another sign of hope, The Liberian National Transition Government (LNTG) is in place and is beginning to function. Most of the major parties are willing to take their differences to the negotiating table and there has been substantial progress in the humanitarian situation since the signing of the Contonou Peace Accords on July 25, 1993.

But serious questions remain. Can the current factional violence be halted? Will Liberia be able to create stable conditions for peaceful elections in September? Will a new elected government be constructed in such a way as to guarantee all parties a place at the table?

In short, can this country sow the seeds for a sustainable democracy that will be acceptable to the Liberian people? Unless the political factions in Liberia show a greater commitment to the peace process and to creating the conditions for demobilization, it does not appear that we will be able to give positive answers to these questions.

Liberia also presents a serious test case for U.S. policy in Africa. How can U.S. policy best support this fragile transition process which is critical for stability in the region?

It is important to remember that the right kind of engagement in Liberia today can reduce the high cost of regional conflict that could arise from a failed transition.

Moreover, I think we are all aware that the United States bears a special responsibility for the situation in Liberia. The historic ties between the United States and Liberia go back to the founding of this country as a homeland for ex-slaves returning to Africa.

In the 1980's, Liberia was one of the leading recipients of U.S. aid and in 1985 the United States lent its support to a fraudulent election process, an event that has certainly pushed Liberia deeper into conflict.

So I think it is appropriate that we all be reminded that the transition in Liberia is of critical importance. As I said in the beginning, it seems that there are two paths for Liberians to choose from. I certainly hope events in Rwanda remind all Liberia of the potential cost of one of these choices.

We have two panels today, and I will ask the indulgence of Ambassador Moose, and Ms. Borton. Congressman Floyd Flake has asked to speak briefly and so if we could stay in recess, he is on his way. I warned him that we start on time, so with deference to a colleague, if we could wait just a second.

[Recess.]

Mr. JOHNSTON. Ambassador Moose, let's start and we can leave a seat for Congressman Flake. Before we start your testimony though, Mr. Burton may have an opening statement.

Mr. BURTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

We meet today at a time of great promise, but at the same time of great danger for Liberia. Few countries in Africa are as bound to us Americans by ties of history and affection as Liberia. As a result, we are especially concerned about the flow of events there.

The civil war in Liberia, which has taken so many innocent lives over the past 5 years, has been, like our own civil war, a heartbreaking experience.

The hope which was kindled by last July's peace accord must not be allowed to flag. Liberia must not be allowed to sink back into the misery of the past few years.

Reports of recent days indicate that the peace accords are behind schedule and that fighting has erupted among and between several factions.

It is absolutely critical that the international community and especially the African community not allow the Liberian situation to deteriorate further.

The African peacekeeping force in Liberia has set a very encouraging precedent for conflict resolution in Africa. So above all, Mr. Chairman, our appeal must be to the Liberian people and their leaders. This opportunity for peace must not be allowed to fail.

As is so often the case in other countries, the future of your own country is in your own hands.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Dan Burton appears in the appendix.]

Mr. JOHNSTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Burton.

Judge Hastings, do you have an opening statement?

Mr. HASTINGS. No, thank you, Mr. Chairman, I do not.

Mr. JOHNSTON. We will start, but will allow the Congressman to play through if he arrives.

STATEMENT OF HON. GEORGE MOOSE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. MOOSE. Thank you very much Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee. I welcome this opportunity to appear before you today to talk about the situation in Liberia and the U.S. policy with respect to Liberia. With your permission, I would like to read an abbreviated version of my statement.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Your full statement will be made a matter of record.

Mr. MOOSE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The peaceful resolution of the devastating 4-year Liberian civil war is one of the administration's highest priorities in Africa. The Liberian conflict has given rise to a humanitarian crisis, horrific human rights abuses and massive refugee flows. It is also contributing to regional instability throughout West Africa.

These conditions call for an active U.S. policy response, especially in view of the deep historical and cultural ties between our two countries.

U.S. policy toward Liberia has been clear and consistent. We seek a negotiated settlement of the conflict with the assistance of the U.N. and of Liberia's neighbors and the Economic Community of West African States. We believe such a settlement should include provisions for full disarmament of all warring factions, return home of more than 1 million refugees and displaced persons, credible democratic elections and the establishment of a unified government based on respect for human rights, democratic principles and fiscal accountability.

We look forward to the day when Liberia will have a government which has been freely and fairly chosen and a viable economy which will serve to underpin its domestic stability.

The administration strongly backs, therefore, the July 1993 Contonou Accord and has provided substantial diplomatic and financial support for its implementation under the auspices of the United Nations and ECOWAS.

We welcome the installation in March of the coalition Liberian National Transitional Government, (LNTG) and the simultaneous startup of the disarmament process.

However, we are deeply concerned about recent setbacks to the process, including political disputes over the composition of the LNTG and the outbreak of fighting between and within some of the factions.

I would note further that, despite the progress that we have seen over the last several months, developments of the last 2 months are a source of great concern. First, distrust among the factions runs deep as reflected in the transitional government's inability to overcome internal disputes and to establish its authority outside the greater Monrovia area.

The final cabinet post of foreign minister was settled only within the last few days following months of controversy. More alarmingly, there has been a serious upsurge in violence between and

within some of the factions. ULIMO is in the midst of a violent internal rift between rival ethnic groups within the ULIMO organization.

The two subfactions have battled each other in and around Tubmanburg, north of Monrovia. There are firsthand reports of ethnic retribution carried out by both sides against civilians.

Mr. JOHNSTON. If I could interrupt you and let the Congressman play through.

Congressman Flake is most interested in Africa. He was on our last trip to southern Africa in which we visited nine countries in 10 days, and as a member of the Banking Committee, he has been very instrumental in restructuring the debt of this continent and we welcome you to make a statement about Liberia, Congressman.

STATEMENT OF HON. FLOYD FLAKE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you very much, Congressman. Let me thank you for the opportunity to have joined with the Subcommittee on Africa in our trip to the Southern Horn of Africa in January of this year. I think it was informative to me and certainly very helpful in terms of shaping some of my ideas as relating to African legislation, and subsequent meetings with Secretary Moose and our discussions about what needs to be done in some parts of those countries. I thought it was very good.

As you know, I have long been involved in Liberia in large measure because my denomination has some churches there. Long before my coming to Congress and subsequent to being here, I have had opportunities to go there and preach in Monrovia and Atherton and other communities.

I have a personal relationship with so many of the people there that I find it very disturbing that as we look at all the hot spots in the world, it is rare that we see any stories on Liberia. I have tried to get involved in the process by moving us toward some degree of stability. With you, Tony Hall and Barney Frank, I introduced H.R. 4238, the Liberian Relief Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Act of 1994.

I come in part because I want to be on the record in support of Liberia I think it helps Liberian's move toward a degree of self-sufficiency while at the same time bringing some attention to the need for humanitarian relief and helping in education for the persons there.

These people in many instances are not responsible for their conditions. They have been victimized by war. The impact is not only measured by what is happening internally in Liberia, but also in surrounding countries. Those people who are refugees will move across the borders and many of those people who are living here in America, who find themselves having moved their whole families with an inability to return home.

It is out of this concern that I have looked back in the history to see this body of freed Americans who went back, started a country, developed a relationship with the United States of America, that relationship has been long-standing until the point of the recent crises. It is my hope that we will understand an obligation to a country that has been so supportive to us. It seems to me that

we have a debt and an obligation for some degree of reciprocity as we contemplate support for the people of Liberia.

I met with President Doe 6 weeks before the collapse, and I discussed with him the necessity for changing the face of Liberia for the rest of the world. He did not seem to have an understanding of the kind of problems that people were sharing with me as I had been out into the countryside.

He rather spent his time talking about what America had done or had not done as opposed to what was happening in his own country.

That is in the past now. I think that we must put the Doe years behind us as well as the years of others who served in the Presidency there, and try to do all we can to bring all the parties to the table without necessarily taking sides, but dealing with the reality that we want someone who is concerned genuinely about the people and not about their own self-interest.

It is my hope, therefore, that as we continue to move forward the millions of displaced people will be able to return to their homes.

Mrs. Lewis York runs the Liberia College which is a part of the Elijah Turner Church has returned home. She is working feverishly to try to build that school into a university and there are many persons like her who only desire peace. America should participate in a meaningful way to ensure that Liberians establish a democratic government, educate their young people and up-lift themselves economically in order to become more competitive in Africa, and in the world marketplace.

I know Liberian business people who also have lost there businesses. They are looking forward to the opportunity to be able to rebuild; therefore, I hope that we can all work together by guaranting peace in Liberia and hopefully build a level of economic prosperity in that country.

So, Mr. Chairman, I am here to offer you whatever support I can give you. You know may areas of interest. I think we have developed an excellent relationship during the trip and, I hope will continue during our years in Congress together. Those things that cannot be done by the Subcommittee on Africa I would like to work with you in doing them as relates to debt relief and other issues through my role on the Banking Committee. This kind of marriage is the kind of relationship that will help us to continue to do a better job all around.

Mr. Dan Burton and I just a couple hours ago opened a parenting group to talk about how we might be able to reinforce the parenting support systems for American families. We have been involved in some of the issues in India together and supported legislation together in that area.

So I see this committee as an extension of those past efforts. Unfortunately, I am not a member of your subcommittee, but, I thank you for allowing me to at least be an associate member of your subcommittee. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Flake appears in the appendix.]

Mr. JOHNSTON. It is we who have benefited by your knowledge. I was telling people in going around southern Africa when I introduced myself as the chairman and you were on the Banking Com-

mittee, then nobody paid any attention to me. They all wanted to talk to you.

This may be the last time we invite you. But really you are welcome any time. When was the last time you were in Liberia?

Mr. FLAKE. I was in Liberia in December. The war has been going on 2 years——

Mr. MOOSE. Four years.

Mr. FLAKE. Four years. I was in Liberia in December 1990.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Doe was executed in 1990.

Mr. FLAKE. I was there just before the execution.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Any questions for Congressman Flake?

Mr. BURTON. Quickly, I know we want to get back to Secretary Moose, but my concern has been that Mr. Taylor over there has some pretty strong support and forces. I wonder, have you talked to Taylor or do you know anything about it, number 1; number 2, do you think he is of a mind to sit and negotiate, or will it take pressure from exterior forces to force him to realize the only solution is through diplomacy rather than out of the barrel of a gun?

Mr. FLAKE. It has been several years since I talked to Mr. Taylor. At that time things were pretty fractured because Prince Johnson was still a part of the process. There was no feeling on his part of any real necessity to participate because at that point it was his feeling that he had the strength of the people and the support of the people.

I think at that point he had expected that they would overthrow Monrovia. They would take control of the country. Obviously, that has not happened now.

I have discovered Mr. Chairman through my trip to southern Africa and talking to leaders of RENAMO and UNITA and various groupings that have been on the outside and then started the movements, in most instances they feel that because they took the responsibility for trying to overturn the process, that they ought to be a part of the leadership.

I am not so sure Mr. Taylor is any different than Savimbi and others regarding control because he feels that he is largely responsible for removing the scourge of Doe and the despotic regime that he ran while he was still in government.

I think Mr. Moose has been there several times. I know we have talked since he returned from his latest trip. He may have a better feel for it than I do at this point, but my experience has been that once you obtain power in the way that someone like Taylor has, it is hard to imagine being a part of a coalition government or being out of government all together when you think that your policies are responsible for whatever changes are taking place.

Mr. BURTON. I would follow up by saying I will ask Secretary Moose to address this, too, that being the case and I think we probably all maybe feel that in one way or another, how do we get or how do we participate in getting Mr. Taylor to sit down and negotiate, because he has the bit in his teeth and he has the guns and power.

Mr. FLAKE. I think you are going to have to make some decisions about whether or not we are prepared to put the resources in place to support whatever kind of military forces we put there.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Senegal, too.

Mr. FLAKE. But there was no sense of where the resources would come from to support the soldiers. We have to look at that whole process in terms of what it will take to really give him a feeling that there is a force that is stronger than he is and that that force is supported by not only the United States, but others in the international community, and with that kind of force I think we would push him to a point of necessity to get to the table and come to some agreement even if it means that in the end he is not the President.

I think at this point if we don't make the resources available, and I am not sure what our inclination as a Nation is, we will see more deaths and more refugees fleeing and more dispersions of families. That is the way I see it.

Mr. BURTON. Thank you.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Thank you very much.

Mr. FLAKE. Thank you very much and thank you for the opportunity and for your patience. I was out last week so my schedule is murder this week. Thank you. Good to see you.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Ambassador, if you could hesitate just a moment longer, Congressman Payne has an opening statement.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Let me congratulate you for having this very important meeting because, as we know, Liberia has been off the landscape for some time with exciting things like the new nonracial democracy in South Africa unfolding before us and that is one of the triumphs, but of course the terrible problems of Rwanda.

So therefore it is understandable that Liberia tended to be pushed on the back burner. We are going through the 4th year since the civil war began and the fighting still has not stopped.

One of the early reasons given for the continued fighting was the complaint by the National Patriotic Front of Liberia, Taylor's force, we just heard about, that ECOMOG peacekeeping forces are dominated by Nigerians. We know this was the original problem.

The origin for this distrust was the cordial relationship between the military Government of Nigeria, headed by then General Babangida, and Sergeant Doe, the President of Liberia.

As you know, our recent experience with General Babangida has not been favorable. Babangida was one of the main actors in the recent setback for democracy, the June 12 elections, which were annulled and now General Abacha is in control.

While I know Nigeria has provided financial and human resources to help bring peace about in Liberia; we need to be seriously concerned how far this policy of embracing the military dictatorship of Nigeria should extend.

I understand the United States is even amiable to using Nigerian troops in Rwanda, which I think would be a mistake.

There are countries, Zimbabwe, Senegal, Eritrea, and Ethiopia, I think, would be much better suited. However, I am confident by the fact that we are not considering using the elite guard of General Mobutu from Zaire.

Regardless of the Nigerian experience, we need to commend our administration on the leadership they have provided in bringing back the Contonou Accord. The accord was a vehicle to expand the

makeup of the peacekeeping troops in Liberia to reflect all of Africa, not just West Africa.

Also the administration worked very hard to garner significant funds to expand the number of peacekeeping troops and deploy U.N. observers as a part of the UNOMIL operation in Liberia.

In fact, the United States was the first country to provide funds, not to mention the vast majority of those funds.

While the Council of State of the Liberian National Transitional Government is in place, there is still fighting in Liberia. In the Southeast the fighting is between Taylor's forces and the new Liberian Peace Council, which I understand is made up of remnants of the old armed forces of Liberia and the Krahns, who have severed their relationship with ULIMO.

At the same time there is fighting in the West just north of Monrovia between the rival ethnic factions within ULIMO, namely the Krahns and Mandingos. The disarming of all factions has been exceedingly slow. Only 2,000 of the 60,000 troops to date have been disarmed. At the same time all factions, except for the new Liberian Peace Council, are represented in all elements of the new transitional government.

Despite the disagreements of the past, the new efforts have made positive—there has been some positive aspects of the new efforts. The United States would be very correct in warning all factions that further might will not be tolerated and that those who persist in the rule of the gun will be accountable for their crimes in the future.

The United States is in the best position of any Nation to give strong leadership at this crucial moment. I hope we will do this and not let all of our recent hard work be undone.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate you giving me this extra time.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Payne appears in the appendix.]

Mr. JOHNSTON. Thank you, Mr. Payne.

Ambassador.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. GEORGE MOOSE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. MOOSE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was mentioning some aspects of the situation currently which are sources of great concern to us. The first was the slowness in coming to agreement on the composition of the LNTG. We hope that that has been overcome.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Will you pull the mike a bit closer.

Mr. MOOSE. We hope with agreement on the last portfolio of that cabinet, that that issue has been overcome.

More alarming, however, has been the serious upsurge in violence between and within some of the factions. ULIMO is in the midst of a clash between rival ethnic groups within that organization. The two subfactions have battled each other in and around Tubmanburg, north of Monrovia, and there are firsthand reports of ethnic retribution carried by both sides against civilians. ECOMOG has deployed troops to separate the rival groups but so far with only limited success.

A few weeks ago, two Nigerian soldiers were killed in fighting between ULIMO rivals. In the Southeast a new militant group, the so-called Liberian Peace Council, has emerged. The LPC is not a signatory to the Contonou Accords. It is composed largely of remnants of the Armed Forces of Liberia, the remnants of the former Doe military. It has rejected the general cease-fire established in the Contonou Accords and attacked NPFL forces in southeastern and southwestern counties.

Thousands of civilians have been forced to flee these areas from their homes as a result of this military campaign. Moreover, we have numerous credible reports of serious human rights abuses at the hands of the LPC, including murder, rape, and torture. We have raised all these concerns with the Liberian factions directly, with UNOMIL and with ECOMOG.

ECOMOG has brought together the contending leaders and military commanders of one of the factions currently engaged in internecine fighting and has tried to mediate a settlement. Our embassy has used its good offices to advance those talks. ECOMOG and UNOMIL are seeking to negotiate a cease-fire between the two rival militias of the LPC and NPFL, which has our backing and support. We have maintained an open dialogue with each of the major factions emphasizing that continued international support for the peace process is dependent upon the seriousness of the Liberian parties in implementing the Contonou accords.

To bring this latter point home, the U.N. Security Council recently linked continued support for UNOMIL to concrete progress on installation of the transitional government, disarmament and preparations for the elections.

Absent progress in these areas, the Security Council may request the Secretary-General to prepare options for UNOMIL's drawdown or termination.

In short, we remain committed to supporting the Liberian peace process, but will be obliged to reconsider that support if indeed the Liberian parties do not demonstrate that they are fully committed to peace.

Regarding elections, it is hoped, of course, that the Liberian parties will overcome these differences and that disarmament will proceed and that preparations for the elections will get underway. The United States is prepared to support preparations for elections within the current budget both in terms of technical and financial assistance for the electoral process and assistance through U.N. agencies and private voluntary organizations.

My colleague from USAID is prepared to talk about what the United States is already doing in the way of providing substantial humanitarian assistance as well as the support we would be able to provide assuming the peace process does get back on track.

Mr. Chairman, I would agree with the members of the subcommittee that it would be tragic indeed, having come so far, if the Liberian parties were to squander this unique opportunity to end the long civil war in Liberia.

I personally remain hopeful that with the help of the United Nations and ECOMOG, the United States and other friends of the peace process, the Liberians will reverse the recent negative trend

of events and move toward, forward on the path toward national reconciliation, reconstruction, and democratization.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Moose appears in the appendix.]

Mr. JOHNSTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Ambassador.

Ms. Nan Borton is Director of the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, USAID, Agency for International Development.

Ms. Borton.

STATEMENT OF MS. NAN BORTON, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE, AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. BORTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a formal statement, which I would like to submit for the record.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Without objection.

Ms. BORTON. I would speak more casually from notes and I thank you all for having me here this afternoon. Liberia has a population of about 2½ million people, as you know, of whom almost 2 million fall into the category of recipients of some sort of U.S. humanitarian assistance at this point.

Liberia has received a great deal of humanitarian assistance for reasons all those preceding me laid out so eloquently. In the last 4½ years, the United States has put forward almost $326 million in assistance to war victims.

Since the beginning of fiscal year 1994, we have contributed about $62 million—$55 million of that is food, $4.4 million is disaster assistance through our office, another $2.5 million are State Department refugee program assistance funds that go to the United Nations to assist Sierra Leone refugees inside Liberia.

Over these 4½ years, there have been signs of notable success in the use of these humanitarian funds, particularly in the rates of malnutrition and the health of young kids.

OFDA and USAID work through PVOs and they have found in the ECOMOG areas particularly the rates of malnutrition have dropped dramatically. Ms. Dorothy Holland, serving with the NGO, Doctors Without Borders, found only 1 percent of the kids under 5 severely malnourished in a study done in October 1993. That probably compares quite favorably with some parts of this country. There has been a 50 percent drop in the numbers of children enrolled in therapeutic feeding and a UNICEF study in Harbel showed they could find no malnutrition at all.

Partly that is because since signing of the Contonou Accords, whole areas of the countries can now be reached that we have not been able to reach before. Tens of thousands of refugees in the NPFL territory can now get food and medicine and other attention they couldn't get before, although I must say the malnutrition rates in those areas remain at around 12 percent, which is higher than the other ECOMOG areas, but lower than many parts of Africa.

In the extreme Southeast, there is a good health situation. There is fair agricultural production. A French PVO, International Action Against Hunger, that AID has supported for some time, is the only relief agency that worked there and they have carried out health, water and sanitation, seeds and tools projects. The seeds and tools projects are carried out through Catholic Relief Services.

In those areas, the rural food program, Catholic Relief Services, in conjunction with Liberian organizations through whom they work, have put together Food For Work programs for community reconciliation. It is a very interesting program, just gotten started so I don't have many details on it. It is a national volunteer program, that is located in areas to which they expect a significant return of demobilized soldiers, displaced, and refugee persons. So they are trying through Food For Work to put some social infrastructure back in place to receive these people.

However, as you all have noted very eloquently before me, there are still significant problems. The country is still divided into three distinct zones. We are still far from able to deliver humanitarian assistance equitably throughout the country. There are areas where it is completely disrupted. In Lofa County we have been unable to reach about 150,000 people for the last 5 months because of a ULIMO attack 5 months ago, which you undoubtedly heard about, on the base camps of the UNHCR relief organizations.

Mr. JOHNSTON. What area was that?

Ms. BORTON. In Lofa County.

Mr. JOHNSTON. In the Northwest.

Ms. BORTON. Yes, and Vahun is the name of the place where the base camp was located.

The U.N. warehouses were looted and burned and their vehicles were stolen. The relief assistance agencies left. They have said a number of times they are more than willing to come back if ULIMO would guarantee their safety and return their goods.

ULIMO says they will do that, but no perceptible movement in that direction has been seen. As a result, these people remain without assistance from us. All the internecine fighting and all the groups themselves have generated 8,000 additional displaced people into Monrovia, and in the Buchanan area some 85,000 people have been disrupted.

Other areas seem to be able to keep up with the needs, but it is so insecure, it is very hard to say whether they will be able to do that. Food seems to be OK there. Shelter is the problem.

As a result of the lack of materials to provide shelter for these displaced persons, AID and the Department of Defense did an air lift this month of tents and good heavy plastic sheeting used to build shelters.

In addition to the plain sort of flat out relief work, we are doing an increasing amount of rehabilitation work with the demobilized working through the OICI in Liberia, working through the Liberian organization called Children's Assistance Program doing demobilization of child soldiers. We are also supporting Africare and its very good agriculture programs, and Catholic Relief Services are taking on more agriculture rehabilitation projects, including a revolving seed loan fund for rice.

There are plans that have been submitted for democracy and goverance undertakings. They have not been granted yet The Coalition for Liberian Democracy has submitted four or five projects to the State Department for review.

Mr. MOOSE. That is right.

Ms. BORTON. Like the rest of you, we desperately hope this time that Liberia is serious about making the transition again to be a

stable and productive and peaceful country and we hope that the Liberian National Transition Government, with our help, and with help that comes from the United Nations and the economic community of West African States and OAU will offer the leadership and fundamental change necessary to reach that point.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Borton appears in the appendix.]

Mr. JOHNSTON. Thank you, Ms. Borton.

Mr. Burton.

Mr. BURTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

If I am not mistaken, there is now conflict in Rwanda, Angola, Somalia, Liberia, Sudan, Sierre Leone, Burundi, and the Congo and I may have missed some others.

Mr. JOHNSTON. A few more.

Ms. BORTON. You missed some others.

Mr. HASTINGS. Indiana.

Mr. BURTON. Indiana? That's only the Pacers and Atlanta Hawks, and we are going to get them.

The reason I brought that up is you called me, Mr. Secretary, the other day, and you talked to me about $600 million to South Africa over the next several years. And I am very much, like all my colleagues on the committee, I am sure that we want the new duly elected Government of South Africa to succeed and we want to do what we can to help Mr. Mandela and Mr. De Klerk and all the newly elected leaders over there to do well.

The problem that I have is—I have been to South Africa, the chairman has, most of the people on the committee have and we know South Africa, although they have a lot of poverty and a lot of townships and those need to be addressed, that that is a very mineral-rich country; minerals that only come from two parts of the world that we have to have to survive as a nation come from that part of the world and the Soviet Union, the old Soviet Union. So we really need those minerals.

It seems to me with all the needs that we have just enumerated here in Liberia and Rwanda and Angola and all the other parts of Africa that we need to really take a hard look at priorities. I hope you will take this back to the administration at least from one Member of Congress. I want to help South Africa succeed and I want Mr. Mandela to succeed and have democracy and a free enterprise system work there.

It seems to me through the free enterprise system and industry, we could cut a deal with that government to buy industrial grade diamonds, to buy vanadium, chromium, uranium, other minerals that we have to have anyhow over a long period of time to get to be able to purchase $600 or $700 million or $1 billion worth of product in a 5- or 6-year period instead of giving them $600 million, but that money could be well spent in Liberia, in Rwanda, in Angola and other parts of Africa where they really need it.

They have got a war going on there. There are people dying by the hundreds of thousands in Rwanda and across the continent. It seems to me if we have got money to use, let's use it where it is really needed and then these countries that don't have a war like South Africa, who do have the minerals, we can buy that. We cut a business deal so they get the money and the industry and the

housing and this other $600 million is freed up to help other parts of the continent in such dire need because there is a terrible problem in southern Sudan. People are starving to death and in other parts of the country and they are dying because of the wars, and it just, it seems to me, that because South Africa is so highly visible we are saying let's give them this $600 million over the next 4 or 5 years, and that money, it seems to me, could be better spent solving these other problems of more immediate nature and work a business deal with industry and government collectively with the South African Government to solve their problem over the long-term, as well.

I just, it seems to me, the priorities are out of sync a little bit. You are welcome to comment if you like, but it doesn't require an answer.

Mr. MOOSE. I would like to comment with your permission, Mr. Chairman, on that. I certainly understand your concern and we have spoken about this before. We are constantly challenged to do two things. On the one hand, we are challenged to deal with disasters as we see them, confront them not only in Africa but elsewhere. We have an obligation to do that.

But I would argue very strenuously that particularly in South Africa, we have an opportunity and I see this not as a donation, but an investment in the future, which will pay dividends. It is true that South Africa has tremendous potential. It is also true that in no other country in the world are income gap discrepancies as large as they are in South Africa. This is a government that will need help urgently in dealing with those discrepancies and the tremendous expectations to realize its promise.

I would argue that if we can respond to the challenge to help South Africa overcome its economic discrepancy and respond to it appropriately and urgently, that gives us the underpinning necessary to enable the South African economy to do what we all know it can do. Ultimately, I agree with you 100 percent. This is an economy that is going to survive by virtue of its dynamic private sector, both black and white, and by virtue of tremendous resources that are there.

But I am fearful that if we do not do something at this juncture to assist this economy get started, then we will risk seeing the kind of problems, economic and social, overtake the problems that we see.

Mr. BURTON. The red light is on, but I would like to make a quick comment. I have seen us give foreign aid to countries over the years and they become dependent on the United States over the long pull rather than becoming independent.

It is my feeling that a country that has all of the industrial base that they have in South Africa, all the minerals and natural resources that they have, that if we encouraged American industry to go over and reestablish plants and equipment, we would be creating jobs. We would be creating opportunities for the underprivileged and people not now working, training programs, and I think the country would progress much faster than to give them money when there is a stable environment, stable economy right now, and I just think that that would be a better course of action, and at the same time it would free up the $600 million we are going to, are

giving to them for investment in other very important areas of Africa that are really suffering right now.

I made my point. I appreciate your taking the time to listen to it.

Mr. MOOSE. If I could have one brief response and that is to say that the elements of the package we have put together for South Africa are aimed very much at creating the conditions and providing the incentives to the South African and American private sector to do just that.

Mr. BURTON. Thank you.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Judge Hastings.

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Like Mr. Burton, I continue to be concerned about the numerous conflicts on the continent of Africa. When it comes to Liberia, like my colleague Mr. Payne, I share the overriding concern that this particular country has not been on the radar screen of late and I am happy, Mr. Chairman, that you have decided to have this meeting.

Secretary Moose, just what are the U.S. interests in Liberia?

How deep, in your judgment, should the U.S. involvement be in reconciling the problems that seem to become increasingly factionalized and difficult to mediate?

Along those lines, how much and in what form of leverage do we have over the factions and are we meeting with any successes?

That is my only question, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MOOSE. Congressman Hastings, I would argue that partly because of the historic relationship between Liberia and the United States we have a special relationship with Liberia and moreover that relationship has translated into a certain amount of influence that we bring to bear that others do not. I would argue that we need to use that influence to the best of our ability.

I would also say that clearly there is a humanitarian crisis in Liberia that demands our attention and our response and Ms. Borton has outlined what that response has been to date.

Beyond that, there is a profound concern about what this conflict will do to the rest of the region if it is not contained and brought under control and if we cannot begin to put in place a process leading to peace and stability in Liberia. We already see that in the spillover to Sierre Leone. I know from firsthand observation that the Government of Cote d'Ivoire is seriously concerned as well. All the neighbors are. That is, of course, what led them to intervene as they have in an effort to end the civil war and to establish a process of returning to peace.

Their commitment to this process has been far greater, many times greater than ours has been. I think that it is also clear that they are not able to make it to complete that process without our assistance and the assistance of others outside.

I do think we have made significant contributions in supporting the deployment of additional military units from Uganda and Tanzania, because without that deployment the process could not have gone forward. I think we are making and will continue to make a major effort in terms of not only humanitarian relief, but also the beginning of the procession of rehabilitation. And when the time comes, I am confident that we will be there to provide our fair

share of support for the reconstruction of the country and for development.

I think our influence is important. I think it is important not just in that sense, but also in the, if you will, behind the scenes, discreet support we have lent to ECOMOG, ECOWAS, to the U.N. in trying to bring the parties to agreement in the first instance, and now to bring them to the implementation of the agreement that has been reached.

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Mr. Payne.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As you may know, several years ago when this conflict began, Mr. Mfume and some of the members of the Congressional Black Caucus, when Brent Scowcroft was the National Security Adviser at that time and we asked if they could provide a way that Doe would be able to leave the country, because we felt that if that would occur at that time, that the civil war would have been ended and that perhaps then a lot of the problems that happened after that could have been eliminated.

We were told then even though we were not talking about Marines going in, we felt there may have been a persuasive way to remove Doe, the same way we were able to convince in Ethiopia, Mengistu to leave, that we could have given Doe an offer that would have been better than his eventual death.

But the White House felt that it would not, should not intervene. As a result, we have seen years of terrible civil war that I believe could have been prevented which disturbed me because there were a number of people of Liberian descent in my region of the country who felt we betrayed Liberia, and also as we went to a meeting of the OAU that was in Egypt, as a matter of fact, it was right around the Persian Gulf time, to the country each African nation head relayed to me that same sentiment-why did the United States turn its back on Liberia?

I think we had a responsibility and I think that the amount of funds that we spend is small when we hear what kind of interest do we have, I just went to a meeting yesterday of the ASEAN countries, Malaysia, Philippines, Timor, the Philippines and I was amazed at the tens of millions of dollars that we spend, billions actually, in the defense of the countries there.

We are the power. Japan does not have military power. As you know, they are defensive and the People's Republic of China is still in a developing stage. So stability in Asia is based on billions of dollars that we spend annually to keep everything going. So when I hear about what is going into, as we hear $200 million to South Africa to be developed or how much is it costing us, the $30 million we put in for troops in Liberia, the numbers are not even in the ball park.

So I would like to just make that point because, secondly, I would just like to indicate that I, too, am extremely disturbed. We have a responsibility as the moral leaders of the world to not send in troops, but that we should use our expertise, our negotiating skills, our high tech, our educated professionals to work toward some kind of resolution.

I was very disappointed at the U.S.'s opposition to U.N. troops, not American troops, but U.N. troops from African countries to go to Rwanda.

Up until a few days ago, the United States reluctantly voted along with the Security Council members to consider sending 5,500 African troops from surrounding countries into Rwanda. We can't go into every place, but there are very, very unique situations that I don't think the world can sit by and allow as the carnage in Rwanda has been.

So I would hope that at some time we could perhaps refocus on what the role of the United States is in the world. If it isn't a place that has a lot of strategic value, then we ought to take it back from India, take it back from Israel, from ASEAN and let's build a wall around the United States. If we are going to be the moral leaders of the world, then we need to come up with some kind of a system that we will get ourselves involved in extraordinary situations like Rwanda.

I don't think we will ever see another Rwanda where people in the same country in a month will kill 200,000 or 300,000 people. At that rate you get to 15 million, and makes a holocaust like we have never seen before in the world.

So I think that there are unique situations and I really would just like to continue to encourage you to do the work that you are doing, the fine work you are doing in attempting to keep Africa in general on the screen. It is difficult in light of cutbacks and all, but I think we have a responsibility to keep things in its proper perspective and, in my opinion, the perspective is lost and it is going to take people like yourself and Ms. Borton to try to sort out what we are really doing and not to lose the fact that when we add it all up, we might be doing $1 billion in Africa, maybe $1.2 billion, and as we look at the defense of Asia, we are doing 20 times as much just on that one item.

I don't have any questions. I just wanted to put that on the record.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Thank you very much.

We are pleased to have the ranking member of the full committee, Congressman Gilman. We are pleased that you are here.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to welcome Secretary Moose and Ms. Borton.

What means are being used to deliver food to Liberia at the present time and how regularly are those food shipments going into the country? Who is supplying most of the food?

Mr. MOOSE. If I might, I think I will defer to Ms. Borton.

Ms. BORTON. If I might, I will give some of the answer while the food people accompanying me might give me the rest.

Mr. GILMAN. Ms. Borton.

Ms. BORTON. The United States has provided this year in food value, $55 million to Liberia.

The issue, the movement of food by ship and it is—we grant it to the World Food Program or to United States or indigenous PVO and they are responsible for the onward trucking and distribution of it.

Mr. GILMAN. Which PVO's are on hand?

Ms. BORTON. Catholic Relief Services is running the largest of the feeding programs for us in Liberia.

Mr. GILMAN. Is there much of a hunger problem in Liberia?

Ms. BORTON. We have been happy to be able to report a significantly declining malnutrition rate, so a recent study by UNICEF found no malnutrition at all in certain parts of the country. The availability of food is not the issue; access is the issue.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Moose, how serious is the reported fighting around Harbel between the armed forces of the Liberia factions and the NPFL?

Mr. MOOSE. It is very serious, indeed, from a whole variety of perspectives, first and foremost in that it forced displacement of upwards of 50,000 people in that area; secondly, because it is also resulting in credible reports of atrocities committed against the civilian population.

Thirdly, because it threatens to undermine the whole integrity of the peace process. The disarmament process is now stalled precisely because the NPFL is reluctant to go forward with disarmament while it is facing attack from the Liberian Peace Council. So we have strongly urged ECOMOG and the U.N. to deal strenuously with this issue because of the danger it poses.

Mr. GILMAN. Are they capable of restoring order?

Mr. MOOSE. We think they are. We think the LPC has not reached a point yet where it is unmanageable as a problem for the peacekeeping forces.

We can report to you that our Ambassador and the U.N. special representative were visiting Buchanan and the Harbel area recently within the last week in an effort to try to get a better sense of what needs to be done in order to bring that situation under control.

Mr. GILMAN. Are other nations supplying weaponry or military supplies to the factions?

Mr. MOOSE. You have no doubt seen, as we have, that some elements of ECOMOG may be engaged in providing weaponry to the LPC. We have taken those reports seriously. We have raised them with the various members and participating states in ECOMOG and, again, one of the reasons of our visit, the visit of our Ambassador and the special representative last week was to deal with those issues in those reports.

Mr. GILMAN. General Bowen of the AFL was quoted as saying that the world shouldn't be surprised to see the AFL bitterly engaging the NPFL in a battle that would turn Liberia into Kigali.

Is that a plausible danger?

Mr. MOOSE. I certainly hope not. I don't think it is. It should not become so if, in fact, people respond urgently to the problem that has arisen. Again, we have reason to believe that that response is, in fact, coming.

There are two issues here. There is the issue of acceptance of the terms of the cease-fire, which we believe is absolutely essential on all the warring factions, including those not necessarily parties to the Contonou agreements.

There is a further issue about the question of the political process and who has a right to participate in that process. That is discussion which I think all the parties are prepared to have, but we

can't have it so long as we—one or more factions is flaunting the terms of the cease-fire accord.

Mr. GILMAN. Is there anything more that we can or should be doing, our Nation should be doing to bring peace there?

Mr. MOOSE. Certainly, it is a question we ask ourselves regularly. We have been actively engaged in support of the negotiating process. I visited there 2 months ago, my Deputy was there recently and she will be going back again at the end of this month.

I do think that if we can overcome the immediate problems caused by the violence, there may well be additional requirements both in terms of rehabilitation and development, but also in terms of continuing support for the peacekeeping operation. We are prepared to consider those requirements. But again, at the moment, what we are desperately in need of is a further demonstration that the parties are seriously committed to the process.

Mr. GILMAN. I see my time has run. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Thank you very much.

Ambassador, there really isn't any question that the ECOMOG units are providing arms to the LPC, is there?

Mr. MOOSE. I think the reports have been so numerous, particularly over the last 2 weeks, that the pattern is too clear to deny.

Mr. JOHNSTON. That is mainly in the southeast area.

Mr. MOOSE. Primarily in the Southeast around Buchanan and the area where the LPC has been operating.

Mr. JOHNSTON. I have been told that we refuse to meet with the LPC. Is that correct?

Mr. MOOSE. That is not correct.

We have, for understandable reasons, not wished to confer a greater legitimacy on this group politically than they deserve. At the same time, they are clearly a problem. Our Ambassador has met with the LPC to make clear our expectation that they will respect the terms of the cease-fire accord even though they are not parties to it.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Ms. Borton, your testimony—I am doing mathematics—the United States contributed $62 million including $55 million in food aid, $4,400,000 in disaster assistance, $2.5 million in refugee assistance, and you add it up and divide it by the number of people in that country and then you go and look at their GNP, which before the war was pretty small, it was $900 million. We are a substantial part, literally keeping this country afloat.

Ms. BORTON. That is correct.

Mr. JOHNSTON. I understand our historical interest in the country. Liberia is our only colony so to speak. We do not have the reputation that the French and the British, bad reputation, I might say, in many instances, but at what point do we cut our losses?

Ms. BORTON. What we are trying to do and it is yet another reason profoundly to hope that we can support the transition to stability in the country again; the programs involved in seeds and tools and returning through Food For Work, putting people back in school, demobilizing soldiers are all aimed at decreasing the rather passive sort of recipient state that victims are in and allowing people to become productive so that the humanitarian emergency portion of this can end, in fact.

The United States can resume a generous but not overwhelmingly large development program so that people can get on with their lives.

I think we have strategies in place to do that. So far the peace has not held long enough for us to carry those strategies forward.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Mr. Ambassador, I have used your example as the epitome of efficiency when you were able to scrape together $31 million to underwrite the East African military to come in there in large part because Taylor, for good reasons I think, does not trust Nigeria. Do we have an accounting of that money? Do we know how much longer it is going to last to underwrite the Tanzanians and Ugandans that are there?

Mr. MOOSE. Yes, we do and I can provide a much more detailed accounting of it. Much of that money has gone to purchase the equipment and the medicine and supplies necessary to sustain those troops in the field. Transportation equipment, communications equipment, in addition to that, some portion of that money, about $2.5 million of that money has gone to provide supplies to the existing ECOMOG units because the existing ECOMOG units are providing support to the new ones.

[For information on U.S. support for ECOMOG see appendix.]

Mr. JOHNSTON. In large part, the existing ECOMOG units had not been paid.

Mr. MOOSE. We have made no provision within the monies we are providing for salaries or stipends for anyone. There are reports, indeed, that some of the units in ECOMOG have not been paid. But I think at the moment the funds that we have are adequate for the time being.

I do think that in light of the delays and the problems that have been encountered, we may well have to reexamine them over the next several weeks, assuming the process can be put back on track, may well have to examine future requirements looking toward an election and we may, indeed, need to look at providing additional support or trying to enlist the support of our friends and allies in supporting of that operation.

Mr. JOHNSTON. I know you may not want this to be public, but I think you did approach the Egyptians and they did not want to commit any further troops at that time, but to finish my thought, Congressman Payne mentioned Eritrea. They are having a difficult time demobilizing. I wonder if we might find a source of mercenaries—I hate to use that but it is true because they are there—and by using them you may relieve some of the pressure that you have in that country.

Mr. MOOSE. I think at the moment, the requirement is not for additional units. That may become a requirement further down the road. If it does so, you are right, there are a number of countries which have indicated a willingness in principal to be a part of this operation and we would not hesitate to discuss that possibility with them.

Mr. JOHNSTON. My last question, is that we, obviously, because of Abacha, Bubangida, et al, have strained relations with Nigeria.

Do you find any direct connection between our relationship with Nigeria and the problems that you are having vis-a-vis ECOMOG, and the Liberians?

Mr. MOOSE. No, we don't. For the moment, we have been able to deal with those issues on separate tracks. We are concerned about some of the problems that have arisen with ECOMOG's performance over the last several weeks. We have raised those issues though the attention of those concerned. We have seen at least signs that they are responsive to those concerns.

At this point, we have no reason to believe that they are holding back in terms of their response because of other problems we may have in our relationship.

Mr. JOHNSTON. If the elections were held tomorrow, what would be your guess?

Taylor?

Mr. MOOSE. I would argue strenuously that we should not have elections tomorrow.

Mr. JOHNSTON. I don't know if they are going to be ready on the prescribed date.

Mr. MOOSE. We have said all along that before meaningful elections can be held, certain things have to be done. Rather than adhere to some inflexible deadline or timetable, I think we will want to assure ourselves, in fact, the process allows the parties and the transitional government time to do those preparations before they move to an election.

Mr. JOHNSTON. You won't make a guess, then?

Mr. MOOSE. I would not.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Mr. Payne.

Mr. PAYNE. Yes, thank you. There was some reports months ago that Prince Johnson, who was, as you noted an original part of the Taylor forces and broke off into another group, was in Nigeria being trained with some of his people to come back as another force.

Could you comment on that?

Mr. MOOSE. I have to say personally I was not aware of that report. I had not seen anything recent about Prince Johnson's activities or involvement in Liberia.

My knowledgable colleagues tell me he had been in Lagos, but we don't have evidence he has been involved in an effort to mount some sort of military organization as far as we are aware. He is not a factor in this equation at the moment.

Mr. PAYNE. As the chairman indicated, maybe a 1½ ago Taylor seemed ready to kind of cooperate if there could be more integration in ECOWAS and he actually did call me on an occasion or two—I don't know where from, I didn't know phones were so accessible out where he was supposed to be, but he did get through.

As a matter of fact, I think at one time he said, "I figured you would be there because there was so much snow in Newark."

Evidently, there was a lot of communication available. But has there been fear of the Nigerians? He said if I give up, I am dead and I don't mind trying to work the process out, but they are not impartial.

I am not a Taylor supporter. I am just repeating what he said.

Has there been any effort to try to allay the fears or to say that if, in fact, this whole thing works that Nigeria is not going to attack you and take you out, which is the feeling he expressed—he said, "I give my weapons up, what happens to me?"

Mr. MOOSE. I do think we and the U.N., ECOMOG, others, have made a serious effort to respond to concerns that Mr. Taylor has raised.

I have had occasion to speak with him now on several occasions over the last several weeks. In the course of those conversations that issue has not arisen and, therefore I will interpret that to mean that, at least for the moment, he is reassured that sufficient safeguards have been put in place to ensure that the process of demobilization and disarmament will be maintained fairly.

I think his real preoccupation at the moment, rightly so, is with the conflict between the LPC and his troops in eastern Liberia and the necessity to get that under control. If it is not brought under control, it may well raise concerns or fears in his mind about the impartiality of the process.

Mr. PAYNE. We met with President Rawlings about 3 weeks ago in Accra and his concern was that troops, Ghanian troops did not have equipment or supplies, and as a matter of fact, he said he had to send just about everything he had out there.

Is there any way that Ghana can get the resources they need for their troops or the country could be at least given some stipend for what they are putting out.

Mr. MOOSE. We have, indeed, and I mentioned earlier the $2.5 million, $2.6 million we had made available essentially to the elements of the existing ECOMOG. That was done precisely to meet their legitimate requirements for fuel, communications equipment, and transportation so that they could play their part in the further deployment of the new units that were arriving.

I recently met with President Rawlings' special adviser here in the United States. In that meeting and in other ways we have begun to address Ghana's concerns about their ability to sustain their troops in ECOMOG now and through the end of the transition process.

Mr. PAYNE. Finally, I went to the meeting in Banjul a couple years ago when all of the parties came together, but Taylor then refused to go to that meeting, but as I stayed in the region and visited Liberia, I went to Guinea and Sierre Leone and Cote d'Ivoire, and there were 1.2 million refugees in those countries at that time living in some hard times. They were not in camps, they were just brought in to the local ethnic groups that looked after them.

I am wondering, has there been much of a repatriation and are those receiving countries—maybe Ms. Borton might respond—but is there any plan to take those people; have they been returning; and secondly, have the receiving countries been continuing getting U.S. aid through food products, et cetera?

Ms. BORTON. We have continued to provide assistance to the Liberian refugees in other countries of refuge. There had been some return of refugees into Liberia. It has been very small, spontaneous repatriation rather than a planned one, I believe. But the situation remains sufficiently unstable that large numbers of people are not yet coming back. There are plans in various people's strategies for reintegration program should the numbers become—should it be possible safely to reintegrate people. But as I say, so far it is a small number.

Mr. PAYNE. Also, in Monrovia there were many refugees from the rural parts. Are they still settled in Monrovia or have they gone back out to the rural areas?

Ms. BORTON. I think in general they are still in Monrovia, although there are some there; I don't have the exact figures on that.

Mr. PAYNE. So that is still a major problem, the question of refugees and displaced people.

Ms. BORTON. Yes, that still is almost 2 million people.

Mr. PAYNE. And the final thing, you said there were about 2,000 out of 60,000 repatriated, armed troops that have been repatriated back into the country sort of by giving up their weapons. With the fighting continuing there is not very much prospect if there is a feeling that hostilities are going to resume and those people, the 60,000 or 58,000 left with the guns figure they have to keep their guns to protect themselves, so therefore we can expect that unless there is a containment of the new violence that this whole process will practically stop?

Mr. MOOSE. That is absolutely true. This is, indeed, the overwhelming concern at the moment. The initial response to the disarmament mobilization was quite promising. Within a matter of a week or so there were 1,500, almost the full 2,000.

With the continuing fighting both within ULIMO on the one hand and the LPC and NPFL on the other, that flow of troops coming to the disarmament centers has slowed to a veritable trickle. It reflects, as you suggest, the concern about the future and the reluctance in current circumstances of people to give up their arms. Again, that is why we attach such urgency to getting this problem of conflict both within ULIMO and NPFL and LPC under control.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Just one question, Ms. Borton. Looking beyond the election down the road, are you starting any plans for reconstruction?

Ms. BORTON. Yes, there are a number of plans for reconstruction. As I said, some of the agriculture production work we are doing is geared toward reconstruction. But there are various plans being laid out for, in fact, transition to self-sufficiency in agriculture. Because, as you know, Liberia is under Brook, and therefore there cannot be straight-out development assistance, so we have to take that rehabilitation just to the point where people can go on their own.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

Mr. JOHNSTON. For our second panel, we are pleased to have Ms. Janet Fleischman of Africa Watch, Kevin O. George of Friends of Liberia, and Mr. Abraham James, Fellow in the Department of Political Science in the University of Pennsylvania.

First, I would like to thank Mr. James for coming here today at his own expense from Philadelphia to testify. We sincerely appreciate it. I will start with you, Ms. Fleischman. We have your prepared testimony and we will make everyone's testimony a matter of record. You are on.

STATEMENT OF MS. JANET FLEISCHMAN, AFRICA WATCH

Ms. FLEISCHMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding these important hearings and for inviting me to testify. My name is

Janet Fleischman. I am the Washington Representative for the Africa Division of Human Rights Watch.

Human Rights Watch is a nongovernmental human rights organization with five regional divisions dealing with Asia, Africa, Europe, the Middle East and the Americas. Having just returned from a fact-finding mission to Liberia, I am particularly glad to have this opportunity to discuss the situation there and ways the United States can promote and protect human rights.

Human Rights Watch/Africa has been documenting human rights abuses by all sides to the Liberian conflict throughout this war, a war characterized by massive abuses against the civilian population, extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, rape, the use of child soldiers and looting and systematic harassment of the people. This is a critical time in Liberia, with disarmament at a stand still, new warring factions emerging, and the peace process in jeopardy.

Given the long-standing ties between the United States and Liberia, the U.S. Government has an important role to play in helping to end this bloody conflict and its attendant human rights abuses.

Although progress was made in late 1993 and early 1994 toward ending Liberia's civil war, the situation is now very precarious. Political infighting and renewed combat have brought disarmament to a stand still. As of late April, only 2,500 combatants had been demobilized out of a possible total of 40,000 to 60,000 combatants.

One warring faction, ULIMO, has split into two along ethnic lines, the Krahn group headed by General Roosevelt Johnson, and Alhadji Kromah heading the Mandingo faction. Fighting in the Western counties has claimed hundreds of civilian lives since it flared up in March.

Two other factions, the NPFL and the LPC have been fighting in the Southeast, again taking a heavy toll on the civilian population.

Some 40,000 displaced persons have fled into the area around Buchanan and report human rights abuses by both sides. However, the LPC does appear to have stepped up its campaign against civilians, especially those it believes to have cooperated with the NPFL.

Meanwhile, we have received consistent reports that members of the Nigerian contingent of the ECOMOG, not the Ugandans or Ghanaians, who are also in the Buchanan area, are aiding the LPC. Displaced persons and foreign observers believe the Nigerians are supplying arms and ammunition to the LPC as a way to weaken the NPFL while profiteering on the side.

The implications of this are very serious even though it is not clear how high up the collaboration goes in the Nigerian contingent.

A very disturbing characteristic of the Liberian war has been the use of child soldiers. International law forbids the use of children under the age of 15 as soldiers in armed conflicts and the Africa Charter on the Rights of the Child has a higher threshold stating that no one under the age of 18 can serve in armed hostilities. Nevertheless, the main rebel factions, the NPFL and ULIMO, have consistently used children under the age of 18 including many thousands under the age of 15. As a result, thousands of children

in Liberia have suffered during this war, many have been killed or wounded or have witnessed terrible atrocities. Moreover, many children have themselves committed atrocities—killing, maiming or raping civilians and looting homes.

Another characteristic of the Liberian war has been that civilians have suffered the most and are killed in far greater numbers than combatants. The lack of protection for civilians from abuses by all sides and the profound distrust among the warring factions remain obstacles to lasting peace.

The Contonou Peace Agreement, signed in July 1993, was believed to be Liberia's last best hope. Between August 1993 and February 1994 political wrangling prevented the LNTG from being seated. In February, it was finally determined that David Kpomakpor would be Chairman of the LTNG and that Dexter Taylor of Ulimo and Issac Mussah of the NPFL would serve as Vice Chairs.

It was not until a few days ago, in mid-May, that the foreign minister was finally chosen, Dorothy Museleng Cooper. When she is confirmed, the LNTG will be completed.

An important element of the peace plan involved the creation of an U.N. observer mission in Liberia, UNOMIL, to help supervise and monitor the agreement in conjunction with ECOMOG. The plan provided for an expanded ECOMOG force under the auspices of the OAU, composed of troops from outside the West African region, including 800 Tanzanians deployed in Kakata and 900 Ugandans in Buchanan. UNOMIL's primary purpose is military in nature—to monitor the cease-fire, the arms embargo and disarmament and demobilization.

In addition, UNOMIL was to observe the electoral process, help coordinate humanitarian relief and report "any major violations of international humanitarian law to the Secretary General."

In April 1994 the United Nations Security Council extended UNOMIL's mandate for another 6 months with the proviso that the situation be reviewed on May 18, today, and on June 30.

This provides an important opportunity to reexamine UNOMIL's progress and purpose and to reinforce the need for its mandate to be implemented. UNOMIL has not been reporting publicly on the violations of the cease-fire in the Southeast or the violations of humanitarian law although, apparently, reports are being sent to the U.N. in New York.

UNOMIL is itself restricted in its movements and has not been capable of conducting investigations of such violations. By avoiding the human rights issues, the U.N. is failing to discharge its mandate in Liberia.

The U.N. mission in Liberia constitutes one of the only means of exerting pressure on the warring factions, as well as on the Nigerians, to halt this downward spiral. The U.N. must implement its mandate. U.N. observers are authorized to report on violations of the cease-fire and of humanitarian law and they must protest publicly when they are restricted in their movements by any of the warring factions.

In addition, the new human rights officer to UNOMIL must engage in active human rights monitoring so violations can be documented and their perpetrators identified.

For its part, the United States, after years of supporting the brutal and corrupt regime of former President Doe in the 1980's, largely withdrew from Liberia once the war began in 1990. Towards the end of 1993, however, when it became clear that the latest peace plan required substantial U.S. assistance if it was to succeed, Liberia finally became a higher priority.

As Ambassador Moose explained, the main tenets of U.S. policy toward Liberia are to support the conflict resolution effort by ECOWAS and the U.N., to withhold recognition of any government in Liberia, and to promote ECOWAS and its peace plan. The United States still exerts considerable influence in Liberia and must remain engaged in the struggle for peace and human rights.

The tragedy in Rwanda provides powerful incentive for the United States, in concert with the U.N., to act in Liberia before it is too late. The tools are available, the international community must demonstrate the will.

I would be happy to answer any of your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Fleischman appears in the appendix.]

Mr. JOHNSTON. Thank you very much.

Mr. George.

STATEMENT OF KEVIN O. GEORGE, PRESIDENT, FRIENDS OF LIBERIA

Mr. GEORGE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Congressman Payne.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today about the situation in Liberia.

I was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Liberia from 1978 to 1981 like 3,000 other Americans.

Mr. JOHNSTON. You say from 1978 to 1981.

Mr. GEORGE. Yes. I came back from Liberia and went to law school, but frankly Liberia has never been off my mind. The country made quite an impression on me as it has with most Americans who have visited there.

But Liberia has more than sentimental value to me. I am concerned that our country in terms of its foreign policy do the right thing.

And in respect to Liberia, we have not done the right thing. I have frankly been ashamed over the last 4 years over the amount and levels of involvement that our country has had with trying to resolve the conflict.

Mr. Moose's predecessor, Herman Cohen, after he left office, gave an interview with Africa Notes; and he said in that interview, "Yes," and I quote, "Yes, I believe we missed an opportunity in Liberia. The conflict there started out very small in December 1989. A modest intervention at that point to end the fighting in Monrovia could have avoided the prolonged conflict that Liberia has endured until the present. In Liberia, we did not intervene either diplomatically or militarily; I regret that," end quote.

I hope that our foreign policy in relation to Liberia, that there are no more regrets. There simply can't be. We have to put Liberia at the top of our foreign policy agenda. That has not been done.

My own dealings with the State Department over the last 4 years, I have the greatest respect for Secretary Moose. I have the

greatest respect for U.S. Ambassador William Twaddell. But I realize they are not the end-all and be-all of foreign policy. I believe that those—there are those within the State Department that really don't care about the special relationship that Liberia and the United States has, and the subcommittee has to be aware of that.

And I think that we cannot depend on the State Department to strike the right relationship that we want. It is going to take significant pressure from Congress and from this subcommittee.

I would say that if we do believe that there is a special relationship, we must decide what our obligations are in respect to that special relationship. If we decide that this special relationship—if we decide to downplay that special relationship, then I believe our foreign policy in relation to Liberia will also be defective. We will also have a very hard time convincing other African countries that we have their interests at heart if we cannot succeed in respect to Liberia.

There has been a lot said about the fighting that has gone on the last 4 years. Recently—last month, in fact—I was in Liberia. I also attended a conflict resolution workshop which took 90 individuals from Liberia outside of Liberia for a week, and these were representatives of the different factions. I came away from that workshop realizing that we are not that far away from peace in Liberia. There is a generally—generally, the factions recognize the Liberian National Transitional Government. They want to participate in the transitional process.

Indeed, today, the first cabinet meeting of the LNTG was held. In the press statement that was released, the first thing that they did was ask for U.S. recognition. There is also an election commission that is functioning. And we would do very well to support that process that they are trying to develop, the transitional process.

Most of the factions have committed themselves to this transitional process, and it needs some gentle pushes. I think that we see light at the end of the tunnel, but just as quickly, if we do not pay the right sort of attention to Liberia, the process could slip back and we could see chaos once again in the country.

I would like to see Liberia high on the foreign policy agenda, maybe the highest priority in terms of Africa. I think our relationship with Liberia demands that. I have been angry over the last 4 years at the level of participation, the level of monitoring by the U.S. Government, the level of commitment.

I even remember back in the first hearing that was held after the war began—and I think it was in June 1990, before this subcommittee—Secretary Cohen said categorically that the United States would not mediate; and with all due respect, the committee at that time did not question the Secretary, did not question that statement.

The committee has got to question U.S. policy, and at every point, and has to monitor it at every point. I believe that the U.S. Government has to give its full support to the LNTG and do everything possible to facilitate the shift of power from the factions to that government.

We also need to strengthen and support the peacekeeping units that are there and help correct any deviation from their mandate.

We should begin electoral support now. The time line from disarmament, the beginning of disarmament to elections is 6 months. That is a short period of time. We can take advantage of this opportunity now to strengthen the elections commission, which is functioning. They need assistance, technical assistance in particular. Anything we can do at this point to strengthen that elections commission will not only strengthen the credibility of the transitional government, but in the end, make elections freer and fairer.

We should also support programs that are geared toward conflict resolution. There are American organizations that are involved in that—very hard time finding money to do it, but it is an important step, conflict resolution and reconciliation.

And there is one point, perhaps, if the situation does not improve in Liberia, we will—I would be very much in favor of seeing the President appoint a special representative, a special envoy. We have done that in other cases, and it signifies the level of concern of the United States. I hope that is not necessary, but if it is, that special envoy could work quite well with the U.N. Secretary General's special representative.

Lastly, I believe that we have to support reconstruction in Liberia. That can begin now. Children are not—are going to school. They don't have roofs over their heads. They don't have books. They don't have chairs to sit on. I was at the University of Liberia at the law school, which one would expect to have a significant level of support, more than the public school system. There are 126 students at the law school. There are 16 chairs. Curfew is over at 7:00 a.m. in the morning and law students try to queue up in line at the law school as soon as curfew—as they can because the first 16 students that get in the building grab the chairs and walk around the rest of the day with those chairs. It is a sad situation.

There is no money for that. The U.S. Government has no money for that.

I believe that Congressman Flake's bill, the bill that was introduced by Congressman Flake, is an important step in the right direction. And I notice that—I believe that both you, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Payne have cosponsored that bill, H.R. 4238; and that is a modest but important step toward the reconstruction of Liberia. It has already been described, what the problems are, with Brook.

There is going to have to be some sort of effort by Congress to make the money available for reconstruction in Liberia. And I believe that that can begin now and will actually help the peace process along when we start building schools and putting people back to work.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you very much for this opportunity again. I have always been impressed by the people of Liberia and how they have survived this war. They have a great deal of spirit and there is a strong desire among the vast majority of Liberians to end this war, to reunite their country and to build a new Liberia. I hope that the subcommittee can give its full support to the people of Liberia to build that new Liberia.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. George appears in the appendix.]

Mr. JOHNSTON. Mr. George, what is your occupation?

Mr. GEORGE. I am a lawyer.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Do you practice here in D.C.?
Mr. GEORGE. Yes, sir.
Mr. JOHNSTON. OK.
Mr. GEORGE. By the way, my unpaid job is President of Friends of Liberia.
Mr. JOHNSTON. I am sure that is very lucrative, only exceeded by a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, Professor James.

STATEMENT OF MR. ABRAHAM L. JAMES, FELLOW IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. JAMES. Thank you very much, Chairman Johnston. Thank you for inviting me—you and the other members of this committee for inviting me to participate on this panel today.

Uppermost in the minds of most Liberians is the issue of the crisis. The Liberian crisis, the war, the situation there has devastated most of our people for over a long period, the last 4 years, and before that, a very, very brutal dictatorship. Through the years, over the years, many, many people have been killed. These numbers have varied from 15,000—I have seen some other figures showing figures as high as 150,000.

The fact is that many people have been killed, many have been traumatized, and the story still goes on. We still are not at the end of the road.

As I came here this afternoon, I was reminded about the fact that in the literature on the birth of Liberia there is always reference made to the fact that the birth of Liberia as a nation was unique. Now, I recall that it is very impressive that in 1819, on March 3, 1819, the Congress of the United States passed an act that provided the resources for the entity that later became the Republic of Liberia. Over the years, a relationship has developed, and I am very glad to see the references made to that relationship here today.

There have been some arguments sometimes that cold war conditions and situations must cause some of these relationships to be interrupted, but the ties that have bound us together have been ones based on history, culture, and, of course, kinship. And I think that will transcend—as I see them, they will transcend the absence or the presence of war or the cold war.

So as we look at the situation in Liberia, it becomes very, very interesting regarding U.S. policy over the years. We have watched that, and I want to start out by giving my recommendation which closely follows some of the things that Mr. George has said here.

Africans are very moved by perception, and so I think one way to start now to make this a high-profile policy is to have the meaning of designating somebody to serve as the U.S. representative, liaison officer, regarding—on the Liberian situation, simply the transformation, transfer to a democracy.

And let me hasten very quickly to add that there will be no overlaps. There will be no usurpation of the role of the Assistant Secretary. I respect very much that we spoke here today and sent other officials to Liberia. But this role, the role of this representative will be primarily to coordinate and to ensure the implementation of the peace accord, because it seems to me that one of the

main problems now we are facing today is not that the laws are not there, not that the facilities are not there, but I think the problem is one of implementation.

If the peace accord were implemented by all the parties involved, it seems to me that the problem, what we see as a problem in Liberia could come to an end fairly easily.

The other thing I want to mention is the question of disarmament. I think that, first and foremost, the most important single step regarding the Liberian crisis now is disarmament. And I would tie that in later. I will come back to the point and see how it relates to election, the right and the opportunity for Liberians to share and to exercise the franchise to elect somebody.

It seems to me that disarmament would be the first major step, should be the main concern, the main thrust of the American policy at this juncture. That, to my mind, would be followed by an arrangement whereby there would be repatriation of Liberians who are abroad. We have almost 1 million Liberians out of a population of nearly 3 million, upwards of 700,000 people.

Now, it seems to me there would be problems with going into the election now when most of these people cannot really participate, when you have more than a third of the population of that country not being able to participate. And of course that could be followed after the repatriation; you have elections.

The other problem with elections is that I—it was my good pleasure to serve on the constitution-drafting committee, and I know one problem we had at that time was the whole question of districts, voting districts—electoral districts have not been properly drawn—and voter registration.

Now, all of these are things that must be put in place, but even more importantly, it seems to me, is the question of how do you exercise the franchise in a meaningful way when you have armed men up and down, roadblocks set up, and you don't have that communication and you don't have that access. It seems to me that is very, very important that this is done in some way that those things are there.

However, the way I view it, my suggestion would be that it might not be wise to change the timetable. I know if you speak to most people and say, well, it is unrealistic, September 7 is unrealistic; but it seems to me what should be done is to use September 7 as a goal, use that date as a plausible goal, and 2 months down the road, you review the entire situation. Countries could review this situation and then perhaps decide, assuming that there will be some disarmament and demobilization. And it seems to me at that point another date could be set—perhaps later this year, the end of this year, elections could be held if not on September 7, maybe toward the end of the year, to be followed by inauguration early next year.

The other issue that I think should be brought up—the other point that I think I want to raise in a discussion such as this, in the testimony, is the question of reconstruction. Reconstruction and relief supplies and the whole question of humanitarian assistance. Somewhere down the road it appears to me that very soon the war will be over—maybe not finally, but the war will end, civil war will have ended. There will be repatriation, there will be elections,

there will be a new government. And of course Liberians will need to rebuild their lives and their country.

And reflecting on some of the relationships, the nature of that relationship that I mentioned, I think Liberians are hopeful, very, very hopeful that when that time comes that reconstruction assistance and American involvement and participation will be forthcoming.

Finally, I would like to mention about what deters, or what are some of the hurdles of the present situation in Liberia regarding disarmament. Well, one certainly has been the conflict between the—intraconflict between the ULIMO. It seems to me that some decision will have to be made by ECOMOG and the ULIMO.

What I have seen is that disarmament can be either voluntary or otherwise. I would just give one example very quickly and then go on, but usually what has been done is to ask the parties, most of the factional leaders, before ECOMOG goes into an area to get their prior knowledge and get their prior consent. That is the voluntary aspect of this.

But of course we do not—there is a Security Council resolution that also lays at their disposal some aspect of enforcement measure. What happened in the area near Cape Mount not so long ago, when there was this conflict between the two elements, the two strands in the ULIMO ranks, is that ECOMOG referred to them, appealed to them to lay down their arms and to resolve this; and there was nothing being done. So as a result of that the outcry of the Liberian people about the violence, they decided——

Mr. JOHNSTON. What province is Cape Mount? .

Mr. JAMES. It is one of the two counties. Bomi and Cape Mount County, a few kilometers, about 40 some miles from Monrovia.

But very quickly some of the contingents, a few of the contingents. ECOMOG forces moved in and something remarkable happened because under the Contonou agreement several points had to be—they had to establish certain buffer zones, and by going in there they established all those zones, the one between the Lofa defense force.

But finally, the important thing is that the ULIMO leadership came up and said—his reaction was, we accept this provided you take the same position vis-a-vis the Taylor group at Gbarnga. In other words, there was a climbing down and this represented one of the first times that you had had a situation of these people moving in without prior consent.

So I think somewhere down the road some decision will have to be taken as to how disarmament will proceed.

Will it all be voluntary? Must it necessarily be voluntary? We are not saying this, because you go in shooting that way, but it seems to me at some time the combined forces that we have—that we have will have to decide that.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, the question of the new government, the new administration. Is that regime effective?

There are problems. The real problem is one of consolidating its authority. I think this is what is lacking. When the new administration, this new council administration came to power there was a general feeling that they will be more effective than the regime that preceded because it is more broad based—the representation,

all the factions are represented. But what else happened, two things I think seem to be hampering the work of that group.

One, all of the factional leaders are still—they have abrogated unto themselves certain authority. Before, the understanding was that—at the time of the signing of the accord it was understood that immediately after the new administration came to power, they would dismantle their power bases. They have not. They have hung on to them and they are trying to micromanage government from their hideouts and headquarters.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Are you talking about the LNTG?

Mr. JAMES. The LNTG. So I think one thing is to ensure, in the United States, as only a superpower could to ensure, that everything is done to help consolidate the authority of that new regime. The effect will be to help unify the whole country because I think those are the real issues, to enable the power and authority of the LNTG to extend to all, the entire territory of Liberia.

I think if that is done, then it seems to me the question of election will be able to look down the road and say that is near and we—once we have a unified country under a single government, then it seems to me that we can say we have seen the light, we are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel.

And finally, I would just like to add that I feel—in my opinion, I think the United States administration needs to be more actively involved, and one way would be through that representation. The other is through the appointment of this ad hoc representative that I mentioned. The other will be to help. The other would be to ensure the implementation of the Contonou accord.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Abraham L. James appears in the appendix.]

Mr. JOHNSTON. Dr. James, let me just get a little background about you. You are originally from Nigeria?

Mr. JAMES. No. I am from Liberia.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Excuse me.

Mr. JAMES. The two rhyme, though.

Mr. JOHNSTON. That is probably the only connection.

And how long have you been in the United States?

Mr. JAMES. I have been here 8 to 9 years now. But I have been back and forth to Liberia.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Are you an American citizen or Liberian?

Mr. JAMES. No. I am Liberian through and through, yes.

Mr. JOHNSTON. And your ethnicity?

Mr. JAMES. I am a rather—you said about the unique situation of Liberia's birth. My mother is a different far ethnic group and my father is an immigrant descendant as you can find out from the name James. My middle name is Lamean that—which is also ethnic, but that helps me I think to some extent. It also shows that really you don't have all the ethnic groups in that country. That is a multiethnic, multicultural country that we are not tearing each other apart; there is some intermarriages.

Mr. JOHNSTON. So you are half American-Liberian?

Mr. JAMES. Well, yes. My father is an immigrant descendant or Americo-Liberian. I have a problem about Americo-Liberian because of some of the terminology. I think it misses the point.

Mr. JOHNSTON. What would you use?

Mr. JAMES. I have always used the word immigrant descendant. And the reason is, you see, Americo-Liberian is just part of the entire group of this immigrant descendant; there are three strands of them. Those are people who left here, one strand comprised of the people who left here and went back to Liberia; the other were people who were intercepted on slave ships and returned.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Never made it to the United States?

Mr. JAMES. Never made but they were intercepted. They call them Congos. And finally we have another strand that came from Sierra Leone and Nigeria and so on. So all of this, it certainly can't be Americo-Liberians, but the term is used and sometimes in a pejorative when they say Congo or Americo-Liberian.

But really what I think we are talking about is this mixture of these three strands—one is, who left from here ones, who were intercepted; and ones that came from neighboring countries; and the next group is one of 11 ethnic groups. That is where my mother comes from.

Mr. JOHNSTON. What was that group again?

Mr. JAMES. Vie.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Could you spell that for me?

Mr. JAMES. V-i-e, Vie. The Vies have their own written script.

Mr. JOHNSTON. What percentage of the population are Vie?

Mr. JAMES. Very small, but there are quite a few in school, though. Quite a few have gone away to schools across the country and received education.

Mr. PAYNE. Would you allow——

Mr. JOHNSTON. Please.

Mr. PAYNE. You said there were people who left the United States, going back to Liberia supposedly, but were intercepted.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Just the reverse. Before they got to the United States, they were intercepted.

Mr. JAMES. Right. After the Emancipation Proclamation, some—there was still some dealing in slavery, and there were ships that intercepted those. They never reached America. They went back and some went to Liberia.

Now, the general feeling that most of them went to what is now in the—in this case, Congo. What is now Zaire, but in Liberia the term is used, Congo. I mean people who are all people who comprise that group but is used sometime in a—as I said, in a derogatory way that these were people, these were the suppressors and the people who came and forced the administration on Liberians.

But the fact is that group never really came from the United States, the term Congo. That is why I don't like to use the word Americo-Liberian. I like immigrant descendants. You see, because you have one group, you have another strand from the West Indies, you have Blyden, one of the greatest men. He came from the West Indies. You have one of our greatest chief justices.

So in that group you have all of these various strands who are not indigenous. Indigenous are these 11 ethnic groups. They are quite different from these various groups.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Were the 11 original groups there, were they ever part of the slave trade?

Mr. JAMES. Not really in the sense—I mean, they could have been collaborators maybe in some cases, but generally not.

Mr. JOHNSTON. That area of Equatorial Africa was not a supplier of slaves?

Mr. JAMES. No, but there were slaves gotten from that area.

Mr. JOHNSTON. There is a man in the back of the room saying no. Would you like to help?

Mr. DER DOSE. There was a great deal of slavery along the West Coast of the Africa, all the way up through Sierra Leone and in Ghana. I don't know much particularly about Liberia, but certainly in Sierra Leone and Ghana and Nigeria there was a great deal of slavery.

Mr. JAMES. But the question was——

Mr. JOHNSTON. The question was about Liberia.

Mr. JAMES. —were local people engaging in slavery. I am not saying that.

Mr. JOHNSTON. The question is, were they a part of it?

Could you identify yourself, sir?

Mr. DE DOSE. My name is Van der Dose. I am a consultant. I have worked in West and Central Africa for about 10 years and I have an interest in it historically.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Thank you very much. We generally have very informal second panels, as you can see. We have to observe protocol with the State Department because they are all a bunch of stuffed shirts; and they are still in the room, too.

Mr. George, let me be the devil's advocate. These are all friendly questions, but they may sound unfriendly.

Quoting you twice, "We have to put Liberia on the top of our agenda," and then later, "at the highest part of our agenda because of the historical significance of this country."

And in doing a little independent research—and I don't mean to use this pejoratively—Americo-Liberians only consist of 5 percent of the population. This is a country that only has 2½ million people. This is a country in which we have pumped $70 million a year, almost equal to what we have pumped into South Africa, which has 40 million people and has a GNP equal to the balance of the continent combined.

We did establish Liberia 175 years ago, but when does the statute of the limitations run out on our guilt? Do we still have a special obligation to this country inasmuch as we founded it 175 years ago, when we were not one of the colonial powers that abused it like the others did—a friendly question in which Mr. Payne will take umbrage.

Mr. GEORGE. I think that we—you are right. You can only go so far on guilt, perhaps. Our guilt, unfortunately, has been fairly current. And if we look at the 1985 elections—how we handled that situation, how we let down the people of Liberia, and of course how we handled the current conflict—but more than the guilt factor, you have to look at how the people of Liberia feel about the United States. We truly have an ally there. They may be a small ally and, at times, especially as a strategist, it may be an insignificant ally, but they have been our ally and they were throughout the cold war; that if there was one place where the United States could have a presence during the cold war in Africa, it was in Liberia, and the

United States was welcomed with open arms when it was not politically popular to have such a presence in Africa.

So I think we have to look at more than the guilt factor. We have to look at what Liberians expect of a relationship. I am not saying that our obligations are going to meet all those expectations. But I think that we—if we look at our foreign policy as having a moral factor to it, we have to take that moral factor into mind when we think of Liberia.

Mr. JOHNSTON. I think you and I could be very critical, because I was not here and neither was Mr. Payne, but I think we suspended morality during the cold war in many countries. And Liberia is not an exception. You go back to Zaire, you go back to Angola, Sudan, Somalia, we could have a laundry list here.

You were there when Doe was murdered?

Mr. GEORGE. Yes.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Where were you on duty at that time?

Mr. GEORGE. I was working in a government clinic about as far as away from Monrovia as you could possibly get. It was about 10 miles off the main road in lower Grand Gedeh County.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Boy, you were out there then.

Mr. GEORGE. I was out there, but the impact was immediate even though the soldiers didn't arrive for 3 weeks. And when the soldiers did arrive, it was one soldier in a used pickup. The impact was immediate. There was a release and I was living among Grabo people. There was a release. They thought that this was the promise of a new future; it turned out to be one person out for himself and his cronies.

Mr. JOHNSTON. This is Prince Johnson?

Mr. GEORGE. This is Doe.

Mr. JOHNSTON. No, I mean, but when Doe was murdered, was there a feeling now that you were going to have——

Mr. GEORGE. When Doe was murdered?

Mr. JOHNSTON. Yes.

—that you were going to have a more democratic nation?

Mr. GEORGE. I think the conflict was still way too close to home because there was still fighting going on in Monrovia when Doe was murdered. It was not a stable situation. It was very hard for people, all people wanted was peace; but they didn't feel, I don't think, that Doe's death would bring that peace necessarily. Doe was already reduced to control over just a few blocks of downtown Monrovia.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Mr. Payne.

Mr. PAYNE. Right. I am one who, as I indicated before, agree with your statement about the fact the State Department, as you quoted, said they didn't care.

You also did mention, though, that there was no activity at all from the subcommittee. There actually was, as I mentioned earlier. We asked for a meeting with the President. Of course, the Congressional Black Caucus during the last administration for 12 years only had one meeting—two meetings with the Presidents. Over 12 years, we had one and that was the quota. We have had a few more with the new administration. But we met with Brent Scowcroft, and we urged them that the Marines were in Buchanan; the Persian Gulf situation—they were going on simultaneously. We

had not gone into the Persian Gulf at that time yet, but there was interest.

And then as the Kuwaiti situation picked up, the interest just totally dropped, but there were—we did meet with Scowcroft and other people from National Security and did urge that they attempt to remove Doe, because at that time, as I said, we thought that would end—whether we were right or wrong, we thought it would end.

So I do want to correct that statement that there was—there were some voices in the wilderness, not perhaps being heard well. But one of the other problems was that the people of Liberia who stayed in Monrovia felt—almost were assured in their minds that the Marines would either come in and just remove Doe—because he was just holed up in a building, really—and it was felt that he could easily be removed by some people other than the Taylor and Prince Johnson people, or ECOMOG, and they stayed in Liberia expecting that this was going to be over quickly and, of course, became entrapped in there when a lot of the killing took place in Liberia.

They would have left, but they were just so confident that the United States would ensure that this thing ended that they were not only disappointed, but then there were many of the deaths that occurred by virtue of them staying in there.

Do you feel that if the fighting—you know, any of you—could be brought to an end at this time, that elections could be held in a reasonable amount of time? And what do you think is a reasonable amount of time? Any of you.

Ms. FLEISCHMAN. I would say the key, before you can talk about elections, is disarmament; and before disarmament, obviously, as you have noted, the fighting has to stop. There has to be enough security felt or perceived by the warring factions so that they will agree to give up their arms.

We are a long way from that at this point, unfortunately, and the lesson of Angola is very powerful for all of us. If there is not disarmament, it is very difficult to talk about organizing free and fair elections.

That is very much in the minds of people whom I met with in Liberia. They constantly talk about the Angola example and say, doesn't the world realize that elections can't go forward if there is not meaningful disarmament? Other people said to me that they hoped to reduce the military threat, even though there is no way you will get all the arms away from everybody in Liberia.

I don't think anyone has that expectation. But the hope is to reduce the armed threat to a criminal threat, as opposed to a military threat. That is the way some Liberians put it to me, and I think that is probably a realistic assessment.

If you could get it to the point that there may be a criminal fringe that is going to rely on the weapons for a long time to come, but it is not going to present the same kind of military threat that you have now, maybe that is what we have to aim for.

Mr. PAYNE. OK. In Mozambique, they are collecting the weapons first—attempting to, before the election—because as you mentioned, in Angola, once people like Simifi was going to win, once he lost a close election, then he just went back to the bush. Had he

won, he probably would have given up and taken over the government.

But you know, one of the facts that disarmament is going slowly in Mozambique is because when you take a gun, you have to give something. It is going slowly in Eritrea and in Uganda because the incentive is, you get some seeds or some farming equipment or some land and you go off and you have a way of having some subsistence.

And I am not sure that even if, in fact, the fighting could stop, I don't even know where the money would come from to have a repatriation program.

Ms. FLEISCHMAN. If I could add just one thing to that, I agree, clearly you have to provide some kind of economic incentive for these boys to put down their guns; they have been surviving by their guns for all these years. Often they haven't been paid or fed or clothed, and that is how they have survived.

But there is another element that can't be forgotten here, and that is the will of the warring factions to send a clear signal to their troops to disarm. They haven't done that. Perhaps they are not in a position at this point to do it because they feel threatened, but I had discussions with representatives of ULIMO, discussions that got rather heated because they tried to flip the conversation to say, you, the international community, you have to provide incentives to get these guns away from these boys: And I said, excuse me, you created these armies. Don't you have any responsibility for trying to disarm your fighters?

The Ulimo representative tried to backtrack a bit; and I said, could you tell me at what point up the ladder your fighters are fighting for a recognizable cause? Are they fighting to survive or for what you have been explaining to me?

And it got a little bit heated, but I thought it was interesting because that applies not just to ULIMO but to all the factions. They have created these monsters of organizations. They are fracturing, new factions are emerging, warlords are emerging in all the factions. It is not at all clear that if Charles Taylor gave the order for everyone to disarm, that they would; and that has always been the case, nor has he done that, nor has ULIMO done that, nor has LPC done that, nor AFL. In fact, they have done the quite the reverse.

I think the United States, in particular, has to hold those warring factions to account for their lack of cooperation in disarmament and their lack of even rhetorical support for disarmament.

Mr. PAYNE. Right. I think—go ahead.

Mr. GEORGE. I might have somewhat of a different view on that in that I think that there is a commitment to disarm. These factions have put their people into the transitional government, and that has taken power away from them to a large degree.

But the problem has kind of come full circle in Liberia, and it is quite frankly the Krahn tribe which is the focus of the problem right now. I mentioned that in a workshop that I was with—with participants, representatives of the different factions; and I became very much aware and so did the other participants from—the Krahn participants there that this is—they have great fear for their future security. I don't know whether that fear is legitimate or not, but it is something which is driving the conflict right now.

They also have great suspicion because they are not formally part of the transitional process. They have suspicion of that process, and they have a fear of being deceived somehow.

So those psychological factors are certainly, I think, influencing this and again it has come full circle. The Krahns, as Doe's tribe, are now the ones that are afraid.

Mr. PAYNE. Yes, sir.

Mr. JAMES. I was just going to add, I think an additional problem is the emergence of these new splinter groups. What is happening is very interesting in that the LPC claims, or at least is laying claim to, a number of—a sizable amount of territory; and at the same time, they are arguing that they have no role. No one, I think, in the process would really want the Contonou agreement to be amended to include them, to get on the council and become members of the Supreme Court or whatever.

What people are saying is that if this is so, if they really have a right to the territories, then why don't you stake your claims at a ballot box, organize yourself as a party, a political party, and contest the elections? You see, you don't do this on the battlefield, I think because if that is done, if you decide you will pacify the LPC—or any other group, I am not just picking on the LPC—the thing is you might have new splinter groups mushrooming all over the place, and the whole meaning and the very spirit of the Contonou accord will be lost.

However, I do believe that somebody needs to talk to them. It wouldn't be a bad thing to talk with the LPC people and let them know exactly where things are, that they are regarded as part of it and that all the laws, all the regulations, the Contonou agreement, the United Nations Security Council resolution apply to all of them. I think these things should be made clear to them.

And so, in that case, you may be able to handle that problem in an entirely different way.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much. I won't take any more time. It was just that I think Taylor had the same problem; when they would talk about elections, he wasn't sure he had the time to, rather than leave it to the ballot box. I think he wanted to be President badly, but he wasn't sure that he could win the election; and that was one of the reasons, I think, that he went back out and did not cooperate.

But I would hope that, as the lady brought out, the splinter groups—Somalia is a good example of the so-called "technicals," who are just a bunch of young thugs who mounted guns on the back of trucks and they rode around the city almost like extortionists, really. They just feel, you have got the gun, you get some food, you take a car, you do whatever you want because you have the gun; and that is why there has to be a plan.

And you know our State Department, I have been very critical of them because they have poor plans. They don't fumble the ball anymore. They don't even get the ball. I tell them that, too, now that most of them are gone.

Even the Haiti plan, it was great that the President announced the new plan, put in a new envoy, special envoy to Haiti, Bill Gray. And then said it might take a few months because we don't have anywhere to take the Haitians if we pick them up, we are going

to rent a couple of boats from some Ukrainians maybe and bring it over sometime.

We take people back to Haiti right now. They just figured that the policy is in, but right, wrong, you made a mistake 3 weeks too late, too early, maybe 5 weeks too early, so you get back on a U.S. cruiser and you get turned back. It is like taking somebody back into a burning house, you know. They run out, so you put them back in and you say, sorry, maybe try it again 5 weeks from now; we may have it in place in 5, 6, 7 weeks. It is ridiculous.

Why announce a policy when it is no policy? I mean, it is a policy they hope to have and probably will get going, but they haven't even got a country yet to say that you can do some of the repatriation on land.

So I am just hoping—and that is an hour from Miami by plane, so I am wondering if Liberia, which was pulled off of the whole radar, hopefully they are working on a real plan to assist in, one, as you mentioned, stopping the fighting; and then, two, having a repatriation plan; three, being able to pay for this; and four, being able to put in a system so that elections can be held.

But thank you very much.

You know, Mr. James, there are some Paynes, you know, that I think went back from Virginia back over to Liberia; and I was downtown and saw some Payne Street or Payne Airport, so I need to talk to you. I think I have got an uncle or granddad over there somewhere possibly.

So you have heard the Paynes name over there, right?

Mr. JAMES. The airport. One of our Presidents.

Mr. PAYNE. I always felt I was important. Let me sit up straight here.

Mr. JOHNSTON. I seem to have lost control of this meeting.

I might say that Prince Johnson and I were of no kin.

We may have to go vote shortly. This is historic. I think this is the first meeting in 17 months that we were able to get through without the buzzer going off six times.

I will ask short questions and ask you to give short answers, if I may.

When were you in Liberia?

Ms. FLEISCHMAN. In April.

Mr. JOHNSTON. April. My goodness. In your testimony on page 9, UNOMIL has not been reporting publicly on either of the violations of the cease-fire in the Southeast or the violations of humanitarian law. Why is that? Why are they not coming forward?

Ms. FLEISCHMAN. Part of the problem is they are unarmed, and they have been restricted by all the factions in their ability to even move in the country. So part of the problem is that they have not felt able to confront the factions and to implement their mandate. That is why we have been calling on them, and I hope that you, too, will call on them to implement their mandate.

If they are then blocked, maybe international pressure can come to their assistance.

Mr. JOHNSTON. How about the LNTG? Are they coming forward and making public these humanitarian violations?

Ms. FLEISCHMAN. They don't really have a lot of information. The LNTG representatives whom I met with felt very cutoff. They felt

that they were not able to have any access to the resources of the country, that they weren't being recognized internationally. They were even rather critical about ECOMOG and the support that ECOMOG may be giving to the LPC. But they didn't really have a lot of antenna out there to be providing information.

Mr. JOHNSTON. But you are recommending to us that we put pressure on the U.N.?

Ms. FLEISCHMAN. I think the U.N. is the main game in town at this point.

Mr. JOHNSTON. OK.

Ms. FLEISCHMAN. And I am not advocating expanding their mandate, but just implementing it right now. They have the language in their mandate to report on the violations of the cease-fire and violations of humanitarian law, all of which are in abundance right now—I think it would be important for them to go out there and try to do that.

If and when they are prevented from doing that, we should know; that should be public information.

There are Liberians who said to me that UNOMIL's first mistake was agreeing to send a helicopter to Gbarnga, as opposed to going on the roads since the roads were not open. So Liberians were blocked on the roads and the U.N. was given permission to fly: Liberians said to me that the U.N. should never have done it.

It is hard for us to judge what is best, and there are some very good people in UNOMIL who should be supported. I think this would support their efforts if we encourage them to publicize when they have made initiatives and have been prevented from accomplishing their mandate.

Mr. JOHNSTON. I probably should have asked this question of Ms. Borton.

Does anyone know, are we the largest donor country to Liberia?

Ms. FLEISCHMAN. Yes, we are.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Who is number two?

Ms. KEMPF. At this point, I think it is the European Community. They just established an office there.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Dr. James, if we got elections tomorrow, would Taylor win?

Mr. JAMES. I didn't bring my crystal ball. But I think it will be difficult for the simple reason of not being able, if—I don't know if he is officially free and safe to really travel around Liberia.

Mr. JOHNSTON. To campaign?

Mr. JAMES. Yes.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Even though he might have some support in this area?

Mr. JAMES. BUT MONROVIA, YOU KNOW TAYLOR HAS NOT ATTENDED A SINGLE MEETING IN LIBERIA OVER THE YEARS, FOR SOME REASON WHICH IS NOT CLEAR; I THINK THAT HE WILL HAVE PROBLEMS.

Mr. Chairman, one point I just missed in my presentation: I just wanted to mention, it came a while ago. That is ECOMOG. I think we have in ECOMOG a wonderful experiment in collective peacekeeping at the original level. It wasn't a perfect—it hasn't been a perfect organization. It has been criticized. But I think what it did in Liberia—if the outcome is successful, it would have served as a

wonderful model that can be replicated in other conflict resolution cases.

I have usually summarized their contribution in this way: Anyone who really wants to determine to make a fair assessment of what they have done, I ask the question, or I suggest to them, imagine Liberia without ECOMOG; that is, when they went to Liberia, there was chaos, anarchy. Now they have to stem the tide of the violence that was there—and remember, they were following an uncharted path, a course that has not been done on the West Coast at all to have this group, this collective group engaging in peacekeeping, and not from the OAU, but from ECOMOG, which was, rules were mandated and the concern is an economic community—what do you call them?—common market of African countries.

So I think some of the things that ECOMOG has been doing, I think may be critical.

I heard today how members of the Nigerian group are giving out arms and so on. Now, it is good to find out whether this is a matter of policy, or you have some groups in there doing this on their own. Whatever the situation, it seems to me that that whole concept of collective peacekeeping, as we have seen with ECOMOG, I think should be encouraged.

Mr. JOHNSTON. I can't agree with you more, and I have become schizophrenic with the Nigerians. I have to come in and give them hell for the last election that they set aside, and they have a military dictatorship; and then I have to praise them for what they have done with ECOMOG.

But I think you have to divide ECOMOG into early ECOMOG and late ECOMOG. I think the renegades here, giving arms to the Krahn—because this is 5 percent of the population, and they are a very serious military force in this country now; and it is only because, some ECOMOG troops are supplying them with arms under the theory that any enemy of Taylor's is an enemy of theirs. This is a serious problem.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Chairman, would you yield?

Mr. JOHNSTON. Certainly.

Mr. PAYNE. I think both of us agree that it is a good model. We have been encouraging the OAU, too, and had funded, I think, some amount for conflict resolution, primarily trying to do it through the negotiating tables. But more during one of our trips to the Horn, we were lectured by the President of the new country of Eritrea, President Issaias, who said that they should have used regional people—you should have used, you know, troops from Ethiopia or Somalia—I mean Ethiopia or Djibouti and some of the countries around there, probably, as peacekeeping; and I think that that is what in Rwanda it will be troops from the region—not Uganda, because Uganda has a relationship with Rwandans in Uganda, which probably is part of the problem with the Tutsi Rwandans in Uganda, but the other countries will certainly be able to provide military people.

And as a matter of fact, in Somalia, Zimbabweans and some others, Botswanians were given very high grades in the manner in which they did the peacekeeping, and sensitivity and so forth.

So we couldn't agree with you more, and we think that is a concept that is really, I think, the way to go. I agree with the U.N. saying there should be corridors of protection rather than what the United States simply wanted, a protective area which would not, I don't think, serve well in Rwanda; but I see that we went along with the majority of Security Council countries. I can't figure out why the United States, since it is not sending any troops, would oppose the corridor concept to go throughout the country.

If you just say, well, you—if you get near Tanzania, you are all right. Well, it is not easy to get near Tanzania if you are at the other border.

So I really don't know who are advising our U.N. people or the State Department; they are experts, so I guess they are right, and I am wrong, but it just doesn't make sense, a lot of the things we are proposing.

Ms. FLEISCHMAN. Congressman Payne, if I could just add to some of what you have said, we have done reports on the ECOMOG intervention from a human rights perspective; and especially, given some of the other examples that you have just mentioned, I would say that there are two lessons that should be brought from the ECOMOG intervention, hopefully, constructively for future such missions.

The first is that human rights protection and promotion was never part of ECOMOG's mandate. Human rights improvements did flow from the original intervention, but it was never what they were there to do, and that led to problems later on. So I would say in the future these peacekeeping missions, whether they are regional missions or U.N. missions—Somalia is another example where human rights was never specifically part of the reason why the U.N. was there. And it is important to learn from other lessons—for example, in El Salvador, where human rights was a very integral component of the U.N. mandate.

But I would say that one has to be somewhat cautious in using neighboring countries. In Rwanda, it is a problem if you send in troops from Burundi, perhaps, or from Zaire; so regional has to be a little broader than that because sometimes the neighboring countries can present problems.

But certainly the Ugandans and the Tanzanians have very good reputations in Liberia, and one has to learn from that. But I would say, on Rwanda, I would be afraid if the Zairians went in there, and I would believe——

Mr. PAYNE. I don't get you. You were here when I gave my testimony, when I said I was happy we are not looking toward Zairians to go anywhere.

Ms. FLEISCHMAN. I heard that.

Mr. PAYNE. I think each area it would be good to depend on—for example, in Somalia, that Eritreans might have worked out pretty well. Of course, Ethiopia and Somalia have had some problems, and you did find that in Kenya there was some favoritism toward General Morgan because he was married to a Kenyan, and so there was some—I think if you review it—and I certainly wouldn't put Ugandans into Rwanda, that is for sure.

But I think that the concept of using people close by, if it makes sense—excluding those when you know it is not going to work, and

then going further away, if necessary—should really be an approach, but it is in its infancy. And I think—well, I know some of the early intervention—of course, Nigeria did a job of stopping the fighting, but there was a relationship between Doe and the military Government of Nigeria, so you don't have a level playing field, you know, because you are going in with a sort of—with a predetermined prejudice against or for someone.

But at the time there was no other way to go, and maybe in the long run they did more good than evil, so it is something that I think OAU and U.N. will need to continually work toward and try to filter out.

Also, though, a lot of times the people who should move don't move aggressively. For example, if you take Bosnia in Europe, the Europeans, the NATO countries should have been off and working that system out, but it took the assistance of the United States to tell the Europeans, well, you ought to do something right here in Europe, not down in Zaire where Belgium and France should have done something, but right in Europe where they refused to do so.

So it is complicated, but I think we are working toward that kind of a system.

Mr. JOHNSTON. You know, things are really bad in Rwanda when they seek refuge in Zaire and Burundi. You know things are really bad.

Mr. George, we are coming in for a landing here, but let me ask you, you talked about conflict resolution, mediation and a special envoy.

If you were appointed special envoy to Liberia, what would be your move?

Mr. GEORGE. My first move would be in cooperation with the Secretary General's representative to bring together all the major players—maybe in person, maybe outside of Liberia—but to really get them together to reinforce what progress has been made to tie up a lot of the loose ends. That needs to happen. But that would be my first step. It hasn't happened.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Taylor did not attend Contonou?

Mr. GEORGE. No.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Was his organization a signatory to the accord?

Mr. GEORGE. He was represented, but that whole process itself, there is often a perception that these peacekeeping processes have a lot of funding and a lot of resources and a lot goes into them. I have been surprised to find that they have their problems at Contonou. I was told that one of the bigger problems was that nobody had thought of bringing a printer along for the computer to print out the agreement, things like that.

Finding the money to get the participants to go to Geneva, when they had a conference in Geneva, was difficult for them to find; and it almost ended that process.

So I think if I was special envoy, I would see my role as working with them, carrying the high respect that the Liberians have for the United States, using that to our advantage.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Is our Ambassador there doing anything?

Mr. GEORGE. Yes, our Ambassador, as I understand it, is working behind the scenes; he is meeting with people. But still there is that distance, I think, that he has to maintain because of current policy.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Neutrality?

Mr. GEORGE. Basically. I think that the U.S. envoy also, the advantage to that is whatever the parties agreed to, the United States, as the major donor, will be there listening to it and saying, yes, that is possible; we can come up with the funds to help out with that. But during this process, the United States has not really had someone there in these conferences, and that has been a big problem.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Dr. James, how about you? You are the special envoy now.

Mr. JAMES. Yes. Well, as I started to say earlier, I think Africans, certainly Liberians are greatly moved by perception sometimes, much more sometimes than reality. So that if someone is designated to serve as representative, special representative for transition, what would happen is that will send a very powerful signal to all the parties involved. All the parties involved will be playing, and that is the first impact. The general perception will be that America really means business.

The second thing is that I don't see his role as being one of usurping someone else's role, but I think what will happen is that there will be coordination and it will be like a day-to-day arrangement. He will be a day-to-day person who will be handling this, while the other—the real people handle the larger continent of the Africa. His thing will be Liberia and, most importantly, transition. He will be the transition man, so that, first, all the parties will know for the first time what was off the radar is back on, that America wants to make this—there is a possibility of making it high profile and meaningful, that it really means business.

I think that is one thing, is the message that is perceived.

Mr. JOHNSTON. We have tried to do everything possible on conflict resolution. We have funded a section of the OAU last year and Mr. Mubarak is Chairman of the OAU, and we met with him and Salim Salim to get the thing cranking. We will follow shortly with another bill to try to outline the parameters of what we want to be done in Africa on conflict resolution.

We don't want to see another Angola. A fear I am sure all of us have in this room is that when you have an election in Monrovia, everyone will still be armed. So it is a process.

I don't think this September date—and I am doing your figures now; looking at it again 2 months later, out from this date—well, that is 50 days from now—and I just don't think you are having any progress there. And I think being pushed into premature elections, whether it be an Angola or an Ethiopia or other places, is counterproductive.

Is there anything we haven't asked you that you would like to continue with briefly?

Mr. GEORGE. Maybe just one thing.

I think you are right about the elections, that they will have to pushed back; but Liberians have to do that, not the international community. I think that they are ready to do that. They realize what the situation is.

I would also like to—there is a perception that there is a lot of money flowing into Liberia, I think, which I think needs to be clari-

fied. Most of the U.S. money is flowing in just to keep Liberians alive.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Humanitarian aid?

Mr. GEORGE. Yes. And there is very little else flowing in there.

There are so many things that can't be done that need to be done. And there are also a group of American organizations called Project Liberia, which is five American organizations, including Friends of Liberia as one of them; and I think that the U.S. Government would be very wise to use that consortium of American organizations, if I can blow our own horn there, to help out in support of the electoral process.

In our own organization, we would like to provide monitors to go there; but we are finding that people are telling us, well, we can't come up with the money, we won't be able to do that, that money is really—or lack of money is going to be real important here. And I think that if we do have elections, we need to show a credible American presence there in terms of monitoring, in terms of electoral assistance that would sort of make up for the problems that we encountered back in 1985.

Ms. FLEISCHMAN. I would, if I could, make one last comment to the extent that one can put a slightly positive spin on Liberia. I would like to end with that, because as someone said to me on this last trip—this was my third visit to Liberia—if you look at the numbers of refugees and numbers of displaced and the way that Monrovia, the capital, has swelled, you realize that virtually everyone who could get out did get out or get away from the conflict.

The participants in the conflict are actually a relatively small proportion of the population, and that is very important to remember, that Liberians themselves, in effect, voted with their feet; they didn't want to take part in this, and I think that they will be a very powerful constituency for change when they feel that the time is ripe. And I think that we have to remember that because often it seems like such a bleak picture, but when you look at the percentages of people who just got up and left, who took their children, took whatever they could carry and left, or went to the cities, or have been living as displaced persons for 4 years now, as sad as their lot has been in all this time, it provides powerful testimony to their lack of desire to participate in the fight.

Mr. JOHNSTON. I guess the last question I have on my mind, and it can't be resolved today, though, if you had total peace, Doctor, is this a viable country—2.5 million people with no oil, no diamonds, no natural resources?

Ms. FLEISCHMAN. They have diamonds.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Well, that is right. That is what is supplying them. And probably the intelligentsia is gone.

You all have been very kind to come today. We have learned a lot, and we sincerely appreciate your time and energy in coming today. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 4:53 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

STATEMENT OF THE HON. HARRY JOHNSTON, CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA U.S. POLICY IN LIBERIA

This is a particularly appropriate time for the Subcommittee on Africa to consider the current situation in Liberia and U.S. policy toward this country's transition. I say this because the people of Liberia are standing at a crossroads and in recent weeks we have viewed two dramatic alternatives as to where this country might be headed. I am referring to the historic elections in South Africa and the infamous genocide in Rwanda.

Today, Liberia is struggling to break loose from over four years of bloody civil war. Factional fighting has indeed left its mark; there are scores of refugees, some factional fighting continues, the country's

infrastructure is badly damaged, and worst of all, the level of mistrust is extremely high.

And yet there are also signs of hope. The Liberian National Transitional Government (LNTG) is in place and beginning to function. Most of the major parties are willing to take their differences to the negotiating table. And, there has been substantial progress in the humanitarian situation since the signing of the Contonou Peace Accord on July 25, 1993.

But, serious questions remain. Can the current factional violence be halted? Will Liberia be able to create stable conditions for peaceful elections in September? Will a new elected government be constructed in such a way as to guarantee all parties

a place at the table? In short, can Liberia sew the seeds for a sustainable democracy that will be acceptable to the Liberian people. Unless the political factions in Liberia show a greater commitment to the peace process and to creating the conditions for demobilization, it does not appear that we will be able to give positive answers to these questions.

Liberia also presents a serious test case for U.S. policy in Africa. How can U.S. policy best support this fragile transition process which is critical for stability in the region? It is important to remember that the right kind of engagement in Liberia today could reduce the high costs of regional conflict that could arise from a failed transition.

Moreover, I think we are all aware that the United States bears a special responsibility for the situation in Liberia. The historic ties between the U.S. and Liberia go back to the founding of the country as a homeland for ex-slaves returning to Africa. In the 1980s, Liberia was one of the leading recipients of U.S. assistance. And, in 1985 the United States lent its support to a fraudulent election process, an event that certainly pushed Liberia deeper into conflict.

So I think it is appropriate that we all be reminded that the transition in Liberia is of critical importance. As I said in the beginning, it seems there are two paths for Liberians to choose from. I certainly hope events in Rwanda remind all Liberians of the potential costs of one of those choices.

THE HONORABLE DAN BURTON
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA
MAY 18, 1994

THANK YOU VERY MUCH, MR. CHAIRMAN. WE MEET TODAY AT A TIME OF GREAT PROMISE, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, OF GREAT DANGER FOR LIBERIA.

FEW COUNTRIES IN AFRICA ARE AS BOUND TO US AMERICANS BY TIES OF HISTORY AND AFFECTION AS IS LIBERIA. AS A RESULT, WE ARE ESPECIALLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE FLOW OF EVENTS THERE.

THE CIVIL WAR IN LIBERIA, WHICH HAS TAKEN SO MANY INNOCENT LIVES OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS, HAS BEEN, LIKE OUR OWN CIVIL WAR, A

HEARTBREAKING EXPERIENCE.

THE HOPE WHICH WAS KINDLED BY LAST JULY'S PEACE ACCORD, MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO FLAG. LIBERIA MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO SINK BACK INTO THE MISERY OF THE PAST FEW YEARS.

REPORTS OF RECENT DAYS INDICATE THAT THE PEACE ACCORDS ARE BEHIND SCHEDULE AND THAT FIGHTING HAS ERUPTED AMONG AND BETWEEN SEVERAL FACTIONS.

IT IS ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, AND ESPECIALLY THE AFRICAN COMMUNITY, NOT ALLOW THE LIBERIAN SITUATION TO DETERIORATE FURTHER. THE

AFRICAN PEACEKEEPING FORCE IN LIBERIA HAS SET A VERY ENCOURAGING PRECEDENT FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN AFRICA.

SO, ABOVE ALL, OUR APPEAL MUST BE TO THE LIBERIAN PEOPLE AND THEIR LEADERS. THIS OPPORTUNITY FOR PEACE MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO FAIL. AS IS SO OFTEN THE CASE IN OTHER COUNTRIES, THE FUTURE OF YOUR OWN COUNTRY IS IN YOUR HANDS.

Statement of the Hon. Floyd Flake
Member of Congress from the State of New York

Thank you Mr. Speaker for this opportunity to speak on such an important topic. I have been invited here today because of my long historical ties to Liberia. Moreover, I have introduced comprehensive legislation on Liberia along with 21 other CBC members and Chairman Johnston, Tony Hall and Barney Frank. The trust of H.R. 4238 the "Liberian Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Act of 1994" is economic support with a goal of self-sufficiency. The intent of my legislation is to make Liberia self-sufficient and independent of future foreign assistance. Therefore, this bill provides for significant amounts of money in the areas of humanitarian relief, health and education. Also, my bill allocates money for an emergency fund for victims of the war and reconstruction and development needs of Liberia.

I have long been concerned about the lack of an effective United States response to the crisis in Liberia. Liberia was founded by freed American slaves, and has always had a very intimate relationship with the United States. Moreover, due to the long historical ties between the United States and Liberia, and the support that the United States provided to the Doe regime during the 1980s, the United States has a unique responsibility to the people of Liberia. In the recent past, we have been remiss in our responsibilities. Three years ago, when the Doe regime collapsed, it would have been easy for the 3,000 United States Marines, who were just offshore of Monrovia, to land and set up secure perimeters where suffering people could have come for food and medical care. However, we chose not to act. What ensued was a brutal civil war that has left the country devastated.

Notwithstanding Liberia's brutal past, a window for peace still exits. On March 7, 1994 the warring factions in Liberia agreed to a disarmament agreement and seated a transition government. These crucial steps are a necessary prelude to general elections scheduled for September 7, 1994. With international prodding, and American support we can only hope that the opportunity for peace and democracy does not escape the people of Liberia.

We now have another chance to live up to our responsibilities in Liberia. There may not be many more opportunities to restore political order in this troubled land. As you know, in July 1993, the warring factions in Liberia reached a peace agreement calling for the disarmament and demobilization of combatants and the holding of U.N. supervised elections next year. This agreement has created the tremendous opportunity to end the three-and-a-half year old civil war which has claimed 150,000 lives and left 1.7 million persons displaced. I believe that we should do everything within our power to ensure that Liberia succeeds.

Respecting the long historical relationship between Liberia and the United States, we would be remiss not to do all in our power to support the peacekeeping efforts in Liberia. Hence, we must continue to lend financial and political support to this troubled country. The peace that has been achieved in Liberia is a fragile one. It is fully dependent upon our resolve to aid their desperate cause for peace and democratic government. We believe that any delaying action at this point could jeopardize the whole peace process and would be highly irresponsible. Let's work to guarantee peace in Liberia, and eventual economic prosperity in this troubled region of Africa.

OPENING STATEMENT

CONGRESSMAN DONALD M. PAYNE

U.S. POLICY IN LIBERIA

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA - MAY 18, 1994

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Liberia has not been on the landscape of our foreign policy review for some time. With the excitement of a new non-racial democracy in South Africa, and the terrible problems in Rwanda it is easy to forget that we still need to heal the wounds of a civil war in Liberia now in its fourth year, and the fighting still has not stopped.

One of the early reasons given for the continued fighting was the complaint by the National Patriotic Front of liberia (Taylor's Forces) that the ECOMOG Peace Keeping Forces are dominated by the Nigerians. The origins for this distrust was the cordial relationship between the Nigerian Military Government headed at that time by General Babangida and Sergeant Doe, the President of Liberia.

As you know our recent experience with General Babangida has not been favorable. Babangida was one of the main actors in the recent setback for democracy in Nigeria.

While I know Nigeria has provided both financial and human resources to help bring peace to Liberia, we need to seriously consider how far this policy of embracing the military dictatorship of Nigeria should extend. I understand the United States is even amenable to using Nigerian troops in Rwanda, which I think would be a mistake. Howerer, I am comforted by the fact we are not considering the use of troops from Zaire.

Regardless of the Nigerian experience we need to commend our Administration on the leadership they have provided in bringing about the Cotonou Accord.

The Accord was the vehicle to expand the make up of Peace Keeping Troops in Liberia to reflect all of Africa, and not just West Africa. Also, the Administration worked very hard to garner sufficient funds to expand the number of Peace Keeping Troops and deploy UN Observers as a part of the UNOMIL operation. In fact the United States was the first country to provide funds, not to mention the vast majority of those funds.

While the Council of State of the Liberia National Transitional Government is now in place there is still fighting in Liberia.

In the Southeast the fighting is between Taylor Forces and the new Liberian Peace Council which I understand is made up by remnants of the Armed Forces of Liberia, and the Krahns who have severed their relationship with ULIMO.

At the same time there is fighting in the west just north of Monrovia between the rival ethnic factions within ULIMO -- mainly Krahns and Mandingos.

The disarming of all factions has been exceedingly slow. Only 2000 of the estimated 60,000 troops have been disarmed to date.

At the same time all factions except for the new Liberian Peace Council are represented in all elements of the new transitional government. Despite the disagreements of the past, the new effort has many positive aspects. The United States would be very correct in warning all factions that further fighting will not be tolerated, and that those who persist in rule by the gun will be accountable for their crimes in the future. The United States is in the best position of any nation to give strong leadership at this crucial moment. I hope we will do this and not let all of our recent hard work be for nothing.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

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TESTIMONY BY

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE GEORGE E. MOOSE

ON U.S. POLICY IN LIBERIA

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA

MAY 18, 1994

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you on the situation in -- and U.S. policy toward -- Liberia.

Overview

The Administration strongly backs the July 1993 Cotonou Accord and has provided substantial diplomatic and financial support for the implementation of the accord under the auspices of the UN and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). We welcomed the installation in March of the coalition transitional government and the simultaneous start-up of the disarmament process. However, we are most concerned about recent setbacks to the process, including political disputes over the composition of the transitional government and the outbreak of fighting between and within some of the factions. We call on the parties to cease military activities, resume disarmament, and to work together in preparing for national elections. While we remain committed to the process, we cannot maintain this support absent a clear demonstration of the Liberian parties' own commitment to peace.

U.S. Policy

Peaceful resolution of the devastating four-year Liberian civil war is one of the Administration's highest priorities in Africa. The Liberian conflict has given rise to a humanitarian crisis, horrific human rights abuses, and massive refugee flows. It has also contributed to regional instability in West Africa. These conditions call for an active U.S. policy response, especially in view of the deep historical and cultural ties between our two countries, which gives us a special interest in, and concern for, the Liberian people.

U.S. policy towards Liberia has been clear and consistent. We seek a negotiated settlement of the conflict with the assistance of the UN and Liberia's neighbors in ECOWAS. We believe such a settlement should include provisions for full disarmament of all Liberian warring factions, the return home of more than a million Liberian refugees and displaced persons, credible democratic elections, and the establishment of a unified government based on respect for human rights, democratic principles, and economic accountability. We look forward to the day when Liberia will have a government which has been freely and fairly chosen and a viable economy which will serve to underpin its domestic stability.

The Cotonou Accord

The July 1993 Cotonou Peace Accord, negotiated by the UN, ECOWAS, and the OAU, and signed by the three major Liberian factions, holds the promise of finally bringing the civil war to an end. The accord provides for a cease-fire, disarmament and demobilization of combatants, a coalition transitional government composed of the three Liberian signatories to the agreement, and national elections, now planned for September 1994.

Notably, the Cotonou agreement also established a unique cooperative relationship between a regional peacekeeping force and the United Nations which, if it proves successful, could serve as a model in other conflicts. The regional peacekeepers, known as "ECOMOG" and currently consisting of about 10,000 troops from eight African nations, are responsible for all general peacekeeping activities and for supervising disarmament. The 360-person United Nations Observer Force in Liberia (UNOMIL), which was established by the UN Security Council in September 1993, is to monitor the cease-fire and the disarmament process, supervise the demobilization and reintegration of combatants, and assist ECOMOG in overseeing overall implementation of the accord. This arrangement allows Liberia's African neighbors to take the lead in resolving a conflict in their own region while at the same time bringing the United Nations' influence, resources, and expertise to bear on the situation.

It is also worth noting, in these days of tight UN peacekeeping budgets, that the financial burden of the ECOMOG peacekeeping mission in Liberia over the past four years has been borne almost entirely by the troop-contributing countries, an extraordinary commitment given these countries' financial constraints.

Nonetheless, ECOMOG participants required some outside assistance in meeting the costs of their expanded peacekeeping and disarmament mission under the Cotonou Accord, particularly for the expansion of ECOMOG to include African troops from outside of the West African region -- a crucial element of the accord. The National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), which has clashed with ECOMOG in the past, remains distrustful of the Nigerian-dominated peacekeeping force and insisted on the introduction into ECOMOG of non-West African forces.

U.S. Support for Expanded ECOMOG

Shortly after the Cotonou Accord was signed, officials of the UN, OAU, and ECOWAS asked the U.S. Government and other donor countries to provide support for the expansion of

ECOMOG. The UN established a Voluntary Trust Fund for Liberia to receive contributions for this and other aspects of the peace process. In September, following extensive consultations with the UN, ECOWAS/ECOMOG, and potential troop contributors, the Administration pledged $19.83 million to the UN Trust Fund, specifying that these funds be used to support the deployment of the additional peacekeepers needed to implement the Cotonou Accord. The U.S. stands as the sole substantial donor to the UN Trust Fund, though a few other countries have made modest contributions. In December, President Clinton authorized the allocation of an additional $11 million in FY94 peacekeeping funds for ECOMOG expansion, bringing the overall U.S. commitment to nearly $31 million.

With U.S. funding through the UN Trust Fund, one battalion each from Tanzania and Uganda deployed to Liberia in December and January. U.S. funding is now being used to purchase vehicles and communications equipment for these troops. While the U.S. assistance was allocated and approved for the support of the new troops, some assistance has also been provided to the original ECOMOG forces to help offset their costs for the increased transportation, communications, medical, and logistical requirements of the expanded operation.

Delays in Implementation

The Cotonou Accord provides a credible framework for the transition from civil war to disarmament, reconciliation, and elections. However, the timetable laid out in the agreement -- calling for disarmament to commence within thirty days -- proved unrealistic. Establishing UNOMIL and identifying and deploying the additional peacekeeping forces needed for disarmament took several months. The UNOMIL observer force and the expanded ECOMOG forces were not fully in place until about mid-January.

At the same time, the Liberian factions -- the NPFL, the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) and the United Liberation Movement for Democracy (ULIMO) -- could not reach agreement on key political issues such as the composition of the transitional government and the relationship between and sequencing of commencement of disarmament and seating of the new government. As a result, even after UNOMIL and the expanded ECOMOG forces were in place, the Liberian parties were not prepared to implement the key provisions of the peace accord.

In separate visits to Liberia in January and February, Deputy Assistant Secretary Bushnell and I met with the faction leaders to reinforce the importance of moving ahead with disarmament and seating the new government. President Soglo of Benin, the Chairman of ECOWAS, and Mr. Trevor Gordon-Somers,

the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Liberia, also made strong representations with the parties.

Ultimately, the parties agreed to seat the transitional government and begin disarmament simultaneously on March 7 and to hold national elections by September 7. The five-person Council of State, which is the executive presidency of the transitional government, and the transitional legislature were subsequently seated during the first two weeks of March. The new government, known as the Liberian National Transitional Government, is to serve as a caretaker administration for the country in the period leading up to the accord-mandated elections. Despite its limited mandate, it represents the first unified government Liberia has known since the onset of the civil war.

Disarmament began haltingly but picked up steam and, during the first three weeks of the process, over 2000 combatants from the three factions turned in their guns and were processed for demobilization.

The Current Situation

Despite this progress, we have become increasingly concerned about developments in the last two months which threaten to delay or undermine the peace process. First, distrust among the factions still runs deep, as reflected in the transitional government's inability to overcome internal disputes and establish its authority outside of the greater Monrovia area. The final cabinet post, that of Foreign Minister, was settled only within the last few days, following months of controversy.

More alarmingly, there has been a serious upsurge in violence between and within some of the factions. ULIMO is in the midst of a violent internal rift between rival ethnic groups in the organization. The two subfactions have battled each other in and around Tubmanburg, north of Monrovia. There are first-hand reports of ethnic retribution carried out by both sides against civilians. ECOMOG has deployed troops to the area to separate the rival groups but so far with only limited success. A few weeks ago two Nigerian ECOMOG soldiers were killed in the crossfire between the ULIMO rivals.

In the southeast, a new militant group has cropped up, styling itself, misleadingly, as the "Liberian Peace Council." The LPC is not a signatory to the Cotonou Accord. It is composed largely of Krahns and Sarpos, the former being the ethnic group of the late President Doe, and has clear links to the Armed Forces of Liberia, the remnants of Doe's former military. The LPC has rejected the general cease-fire

established under the Cotonou Accord and attacked NPFL forces in several southeastern and southcentral counties. Thousands of civilians in these areas have been forced to flee their homes as a result of the LPC's military campaign. Moreover, in recent weeks our Embassy in Monrovia has received numerous, credible reports of serious human rights abuses at the hands of the LPC, including murder, rape, and torture.

These developments -- the increase in violence and the continuing political impasse -- have brought the disarmament process to a halt. Although the disarmament and demobilization centers operated by ECOMOG and UNOMIL remain open, only several dozen combatants have presented themselves in the last six weeks. In fact, some of the troops which were demobilized earlier may have returned to their units and been rearmed. Furthermore, because of its focus on internal disputes, the transitional government has made very little progress in extending its authority outside of the capital and preparing for elections in September.

Getting the Process Back on Track

We have raised our concerns about these disturbing developments with the Liberian factions and are working closely with UNOMIL and ECOMOG in an effort to get the peace process back on track. ECOMOG has brought together the leaders and military commanders of the rival ULIMO factions and is trying to mediate a settlement. Our Embassy has used its good offices to advance those talks. ECOMOG and UNOMIL are also seeking to negotiate a cease-fire between the NPFL and LPC, an effort which has our full support.

We have maintained an open dialogue with each of the major factions, emphasizing that continued international support for the peace process is dependent upon the seriousness of the Liberian parties in implementing the Cotonou Accord.

To bring this latter point home, the UN Security Council recently linked continued support for UNOMIL to concrete progress on installation of the transitional government, disarmament, and preparations for elections. Absent progress in these areas, the Security Council may request the Secretary-General to prepare options for UNOMIL's drawdown or termination. In short, we remain committed to supporting the Liberian peace process but will be obliged to reconsider this support if the Liberian parties do not demonstrate their own commitment to peace.

Support for Elections and Reconstruction

If, as is hoped, the Liberian parties overcome their differences, resume disarmament, and get preparations for

elections under way, the U.S. is prepared to consider, within the current budget, technical and financial assistance for the electoral process, assistance through UN agencies and private voluntary organizations for the repatriation and/or resettlement of the hundreds of thousands of Liberian refugees and displaced persons, and, ultimately, development assistance to support the recovery of this war-ravaged country. As my colleague from USAID will describe, the U.S. already has a substantial humanitarian assistance program in place and is prepared to adjust that program to fit the needs of the transition process.

Mr. Chairman, it would be tragic indeed if, having come so far, the Liberian parties were to squander this unique opportunity to end their long civil conflict. I remain hopeful that, with the help of the UN, ECOMOG, the U.S., and other friends of the peace process, Liberians will reverse the recent negative trend of events and move forward on a path toward national reconciliation, reconstruction, and democratization.

STATEMENT OF NAN BORTON
DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE
BUREAU FOR HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE
U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BEFORE THE
HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA

HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS IN LIBERIA

WASHINGTON, D.C.
WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 1994

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I appreciate this opportunity to testify about the current state of humanitarian affairs in Liberia.

Since Liberia's tragic civil war began nearly four and a half years ago, the country's 2,500,000 people have been forced to live their lives in fear and lacking basic necessities. Today, there are over 700,000 Liberian refugees and somewhere between 500,000 and 1,000,000 Liberians displaced within the country itself. While a precise number is impossible to obtain, it is estimated that at least 150,000 have been killed, injured or orphaned by the war. The bulk of the country's public and social services has been destroyed.

U.S. humanitarian assistance has played a substantial role in alleviating the suffering of many Liberians both inside and outside the country. In total, the U.S. Government has committed nearly $326,000,000 since the beginning of the war, mostly from USAID. So far in FY 1994, the U.S. contribution equals $62,000,000, including $55,000,000 in food aid provided through the World Food Program (WFP) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS); $4,400,000 in disaster assistance to support the distribution of food, agricultural seeds and tools, and for activities in the health, water and sanitation sectors. Another $2,500,000 in Refugee Assistance funds was provided in support of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees's (UNHCR) emergency appeal for Sierra Leonean refugees in Liberia. However, the destruction of Liberia's infrastructure and the massive number of Liberians who remain uprooted from their homes will require Liberia to remain dependent on the international donor community for food and humanitarian assistance for the coming months, regardless of any progress on the political front.

I am pleased to report that USAID's substantial contribution has shown positive results. In the more established feeding programs located in the areas secured by the Economic Community of West African States Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), the malnutrition levels among children have decreased dramatically since October 1993. A survey conducted in Margibi County by the Dutch branch of the non-governmental organization (NGO), Doctors Without Borders, revealed only a four percent global malnutrition rate among children under five years of age; only one percent were severely malnourished. The number of children in therapeutic feeding centers there has decreased 90 percent since October 1993, and attendance in supplementary feeding programs dropped 50 percent over the same period. In Harbel, a major area of concentration for displaced persons, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) found no cases of malnutrition during an April 1994 assessment mission. These reports indicate a real improvement in the quality of life for many Liberians, especially children.

In addition, the signing of the Cotonou Accord has allowed cross-line relief deliveries from ECOMOG-secured Monrovia to Gbarnga, the capital of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia's (NPFL) territory. The relief community delivers a weekly average of 280 metric tons of relief goods using this route and, coupled with an average of 500 metric tons per week via the cross-border route from neighboring Cote d'Ivoire. Tens of thousands of people in NPFL territory, virtually cut off from all relief before January, have been receiving assistance on a more regular basis. Still, nutritional surveys of infants and pre-school children, such as the one just concluded in NPFL-controlled Nimba County by the Belgian NGO, Doctors Without Borders, reported a global malnutrition rate of 12 percent, of which 5 percent is severe. This serves as a reminder that while we can point to improvements, major humanitarian needs remain throughout Liberia.

A joint United Nations/non-governmental organization assessment mission to the extreme southeast region in March revealed other encouraging developments. The mission reported a relatively good health situation and fair agricultural production. A French NGO, International Action Against Hunger, has been the only relief agency operating there for some time. USAID has been supporting the organization's health, water, and sanitation efforts and, this year, its assistance was broadened to provide for the distribution of seeds and tools, provided by USAID through Catholic Relief Services.

In preparation for post-war Liberia, the World Food Program, Catholic Relief Services, and their local implementing partners have begun community-based reconciliation efforts. These food-for-work activities have become known as the "National Volunteer Program" and are based in areas, such as Monrovia, that have

potentially high concentrations of demobilized soldiers, returning displaced persons, and refugees. There are also an increasing number of schools operating with the help of emergency school feeding programs.

However, these positive developments cannot be considered the norm in present-day Liberia. Even though the warring factions have come together twice in the last year, pledging to disarm and demobilize and to commit themselves to a peaceful and democratic society, there still is a long road to be travelled. The delays in implementing the Cotonou Accord and the continued distrust among the warring factions mean that the country still is divided into three zones. As such, the delivery of humanitarian supplies remains disrupted in many parts of the country. An unavoidable result of this is that there are many inaccessible areas in which the health and nutritional status of many Liberians today is as precarious as it has been throughout the war.

Relief activities in upper Lofa County have been suspended since late December 1993, when the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO) rebels attacked and ransacked the base camps of the U.N. High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and other agencies in Vahun. The relief groups have expressed their willingness to return to the area contingent on the return of their looted equipment and guarantees of their safety by ULIMO. Although ULIMO has promised its cooperation in the re-establishment of assistance programs, there has been no significant progress to date and, as such, approximately 150,000 people, including up to 100,000 Sierra Leonean refugees, have not received any assistance in that area for nearly five months.

The more southern regions under ULIMO's control have been inaccessible for the past three weeks due to active fighting between the Krahn and Mandingo elements within ULIMO. Even before this open ULIMO rift, relief access had been unreliable for some time. Relief agencies such as Africare, which has been distributing seeds and tools in Grand Cape Mount County with USAID support for the last year, have been forced to forego important programs and sit idly by while their hard and good work becomes increasingly jeopardized by the whims of rebel militias. The relief community considers ULIMO territory to be in the worst health and nutritional status of all of Liberia at this time.

The intra-ULIMO fighting recently has caused approximately 8,000 persons to seek refuge in Monrovia's suburbs. Fortunately, Monrovia remains the most accessible area of Liberia, making it possible for organizations like UNICEF, International Action Against Hunger and Doctors Without Borders, along with their local implementing partners, to integrate these people into existing programs for the

displaced and war-affected populations and to add additional water and sanitation facilities when necessary.

The fighting between the Liberian Peace Council (LPC) and the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) in the vicinity and southeast of the port city of Buchanan has displaced a further 85,000 persons since the beginning of the year. In early February, up to 1,000 persons per day were arriving in Buchanan to flee the fighting. In April, the Liberian NGO, Special Emergency Life Food (SELF), registered nearly 14,000 new displaced persons, bringing the total of new displaced persons in Buchanan up to about 40,000. The displaced continue to arrive at a rate of about 450 people per day.

NGOs and the UN are struggling to keep up with the influx of people fleeing the fighting who often arrive in a poor state of health and with wounds incurred during the clashes between the rebel factions. Many of those arriving now are coming from Rivercess County and the Greenville area of Sinoe County. The nutritional status of these people is the worst of the new displaced population, and the relief community fears that the displaced persons may not have had adequate access to food and other necessities in their home areas. In response, Catholic Relief Services, the U.N. Children's Fund, and the Liberian NGO, Medical Emergency Relief Corporation International, traveled by ECOMOG gunboat to Greenville on May 17 with 70 metric tons of food and the hope of obtaining some understanding of the situation there.

Despite the obstacles presented by the large flow into Buchanan of displaced persons in poor condition, the relief community so far has been able to keep up with their food, health, and medical needs. The number one problem is shelter. The few shelter facilities that survived the fighting were occupied quickly, leaving the relief agencies scrambling to provide adequate shelter before the rainy season began. During the first week of May, USAID and the Defense Department's Office of Humanitarian and Refugee Affairs teamed up to airlift 496 tents and 520 rolls of plastic sheeting for shelter into Monrovia. A majority of these commodities will be used by the UN Development Program (UNDP) and NGOs for these displaced persons. However, 200 tents have been given to the Liberian NGO, Children's Assistance Program, for its child soldier demobilization program.

While our main focus has been on the emergency needs in Liberia, USAID has branched out, when possible, to undertake activities more rehabilitative in nature. In addition to recent support to the Children's Assistance Program's child soldier demobilization program, we have been supporting the Liberian Opportunities Industrialization Center since 1992. This very impressive facility provides job training, education, and counselling services to demobilized soldiers. USAID also

recently approved the use of a portion of emergency P.L. 480 Title II resources to be used in the current demobilization programs. So far, 77.5 metric tons, worth $55,000, has been used.

Since 1992, USAID also has provided substantial resources to agricultural rehabilitation. We've supported Africare in such programs in Nimba and Grand Cape Mount Counties. We've also supported Catholic Relief Services, the largest provider of agricultural inputs in the country. This year, Catholic Relief Services expects to distribute over 8,000 metric tons of rice and vegetable seeds as well as small hand tools to farmers throughout Liberia. While CRS's efforts have been thwarted in some areas due to renewed hostilities, often just before harvest, overall results have been highly encouraging in helping farmers return to agricultural activities in upcountry Liberia, especially Bong and Nimba Counties. An important component of CRS's program is a payback scheme in which a farmer must return a pound of seed rice for every pound received. This rice is then distributed to other needy farmers, gradually decreasing the necessity of importing large amounts of seed rice from neighboring Cote d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone.

For the time being, USAID plans to continue its emergency programs. Approximately 1,700,000 Liberians continue to require our life-saving assistance. We are hopeful, however, that the situation in Liberia can progress to a point in which our emergency interventions no longer will be needed. In order to be ready for Liberia's potential transition from emergency to recovery and reconstruction, we fielded an Agency team in November 1993. The fluid situation in Liberia at that time made it difficult, however, to lay out a definitive plan of action and, as such, the team found it most appropriate to draft recommendations to different scenarios.

One scenario represents the status quo in which we have been operating since the war began. Under this scenario, humanitarian assistance would continue. In addition, democracy and governance projects and activities, which would be appropriate using resources from the "War Victims Fund," would be explored and expanded. The State Department and USAID recently received five proposals for democracy and governance-type activities from the Project Liberia Consortium which includes the Carter Center, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, the National Democratic Institute, the African-American Institute, and the Friends of Liberia. While I would defer to my colleague from USAID's Africa Bureau on the specifics of the proposals, USAID and the State Department are considering support for the projects to help create an enabling environment for elections. USAID also has received two proposals from UNICEF for disadvantaged and physically disabled children. These proposals have been received positively and are at differing stages of approval.

Future scenarios assume the transitional government will begin to consolidate and extend its authority but differ on the speed of demobilization and disarmament. Under these scenarios, humanitarian assistance gradually would move into a rehabilitation mode and be phased out while programs were implemented to address Liberia's transition to an atmosphere capable of receiving recovery and development assistance. Our USAID representative is looking at development possibilities in several areas as well as activities to reintegrate demobilized soldiers and returning refugees and displaced persons.

The reintegration of demobilized soldiers and displaced persons as well as the repatriation of refugees have been, and will continue to be, major issues in Liberia's transition. Already, the prospect of peace has enticed a small number of Liberian refugees to return to their country. A majority of these are in Nimba and Bong Counties, and the local NGO Liberians United to Serve Humanity is undertaking a registration activity to determine the refugees' locations and places of origin. UNHCR and the British branch of Save the Children are restructuring their current programs to ensure that the needs of not only the present displaced population but those of repatriated citizens are taken into account.

The UN Secretary General's Special Representative to Liberia has established an office under his auspices that is dealing exclusively with the issue of reintegration with a focus on demobilized soldiers. However, a fairly large component of the program is centered on community development that will benefit returning refugees and displaced persons. In any case, while some refugees may continue to trickle in, the majority of them are expected to wait until Liberia's future is more certain.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to say that I'm proud of the job we've done in Liberia. The U.S. Government has been generous and timely in responding to Liberia's long, heart-wrenching ordeal. We plan to continue our support as long as it is needed and hope that our assistance has given Liberia a base from which to start in its long climb back to stability and self-reliance.

Since the signing of the Cotonou Accord, we have been watching Liberia from the edges of our chairs and with our fingers crossed. We hope that this time, Liberia is serious about rejoining the world community as a functioning society capable of national reconciliation, democratic government and economic development. We hope that the Liberian National Transitional Government, with our help and with that of the UN, the Economic Community of West African States, and the Organization of African Unity, will be able to offer the leadership and fundamental change necessary for reaching that point. But most of all, we hope that the path the Liberian parties agreed to take when they signed the accord will prove fruitful and allow us to make a graceful exit from the emergency scene in which we have been so deeply involved over the last four and a half years.

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH/AFRICA
Formerly Africa Watch

Human Rights in Liberia
Testimony of Janet Fleischman, Human Rights Watch/Africa
before the Subcommittee on Africa
of the House Foreign Affairs Committee
May 18, 1994

Thank you, Chairman Johnston, for holding these important hearings and for inviting me to testify. My name is Janet Fleischman, and I am the Washington representative for the Africa division of Human Rights Watch. Human Rights Watch is a nongovernmental human rights monitoring organization with five regional divisions, covering Asia, Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas.

Having just returned from a fact-finding mission to Liberia, I am particularly glad to have this opportunity to discuss the human rights situation in Liberia and ways the U.S. can help to promote and protect human rights. This is a critical time in Liberia, with disarmament at a standstill, new warring factions emerging, and the peace process in jeopardy. Given the long-standing ties between the U.S. and Liberia, the U.S. government has an important role to play in helping to end this bloody conflict and its attendant human rights abuses.

Liberia remains a divided country: the Liberian National Transitional Government (LNTG), a coalition government, was seated on March 7 and now governs the capital, Monrovia, backed by the West African peacekeeping force (ECOMOG); Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), still claims to control 60 percent of the country; the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO), made up primarily of soldiers from former President Samuel Doe's army, the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), controls at least two western counties; and a new faction, the Liberian Peace Council (LPC), made up largely of former AFL soldiers from the Krahn ethnic group, controls significant areas of the southeast. In addition, the Lofa Defense Force (LDF) has been fighting ULIMO in Lofa County, and there have been reports of a Bong Resistance Movement operating in Bong County.

Although progress was made in late 1993 and early 1994 toward ending Liberia's bloody civil war, the situation is now very precarious.

- Political infighting and renewed combat have brought disarmament to a virtual standstill. As of late April, only some 2,500 combatants had been demobilized, out of a possible total of 40-60,000.

- One warring faction, ULIMO, has split into two along ethnic lines: the Krahn group, headed by General Roosevelt Johnson, is battling the Mandingos, led by Alhadji Kromah. The inter-ULIMO fighting in the western counties of Bomi and Cape Mount has reportedly claimed hundreds of civilian lives since it flared up in March.

- Two other factions, the NPFL and LPC, have been fighting in the southeast, taking a heavy toll on the civilian population. Some 40,000 displaced persons have fled into the area around Buchanan.

Indeed, a characteristic of the Liberian civil war has been that civilians suffer the most, and are killed in far greater numbers than combatants. The lack of protection for civilians from abuses by all sides and the profound distrust among the warring factions remain obstacles to lasting peace.

The peace agreement signed in July 1993, known as the Cotonou accord, was believed to be Liberia's last, best hope. The accord stipulated that concomitant with disarmament, a five-person Council of State elected by all the factions would take power from the interim government until elections were held. A thirty-five-member transitional parliament would include thirteen members from the NPFL and the interim government, and nine from ULIMO. Between August and February, political wrangling prevented the LNTG from being seated.[1] In February 1994, it was agreed that David Kpomakpor, a lawyer representing IGNU, would chair the LNTG; with Dexter Tahyor of ULIMO[2] and Issac Mussah of the NPFL as vice chairs. Finally, in mid-May, Dorothy Musuleng Cooper was named Foreign Minister, although she has not yet been confirmed.

An important element of the plan involved the creation of a UN Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) to help supervise and monitor the agreement, in conjunction with ECOMOG. The plan also provided for an expanded ECOMOG force, under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), to be composed of African troops from outside the West African region. By early 1994, some 800 Tanzanians were deployed in Kakata, and

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[1]On August 16, the Liberian factions elected Bismark Kuyon, representing the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU), as chairman of the interim council, and Dorothy Musuleng Cooper of the NPFL as vice-chairman. On October 20, the NPFL abruptly replaced Musuleng Cooper with Isaac Mussah, a notorious NPFL commander. On November 15, IGNU replaced Kuyon with Philip Banks, who had been serving as Minister of Justice.

[2]Thomas Ziah, a Krahn, refused to support his fellow ULIMO candidate Mohamed Sheriff, as chairman and this led to the split within ULIMO. Kromah sacked Ziah on March 3, and ordered Krahn fighters in ULIMO to be disarmed. General Roosevelt Johnson, a Krahn, announced on March 6 that he had replaced Kromah as head of ULIMO. Ziah was then replaced by Dexter Tahyor, a compromise candidate.

900 Ugandans were in Buchanan.

A number of former officials of the Doe regime who were known for their involvement in human rights abuses were also named to the Transitional Government and the Electoral Commission. In addition to the nomination of Isaac Mussah, a notorious NPFL general, the most serious concerns focus on two ULIMO nominees -- George Dweh, reputedly linked to killings during the height of the civil war; and Jenkins Scott, former justice minister and closely associated with Doe's repressive policies.

Human Rights Abuses by the Warring Factions

The Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL)

The AFL, former President Doe's army, was thoroughly discredited by its gross abuses during the 1980s and especially during the war in 1990, when it massacred civilians and devastated Monrovia. The AFL was responsible for the massacre of some 600 civilians who had sought refuge in St. Peter's Lutheran Church in July 1990.

In June 1993, approximately 547 civilians, mostly women and children, were massacred at Carter Camp, a displaced persons camp outside Harbel. The victims were shot, beaten or hacked to death, and mutilated. A UN investigation later concluded unequivocally that the massacre was carried out by the AFL.[3]

The National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL)

The NPFL has committed serious abuses against the civilian population, including harassment, looting, torture, rape, and summary executions. During the height of the war in 1990, the NPFL committed egregious human rights abuses against civilians, especially people from the Krahn and Mandingo ethnic groups, considered to have supported the government of Samuel Doe. In October 1992, NPFL fighters were responsible for the murder of the five American nuns. There were persistent reports that the NPFL was responsible for a May 1993 massacre at Fassama that left approximately one hundred civilians dead, although this incident was never fully verified. The NPFL has engaged in attacks against civilians in its war against the Liberian Peace Council in the southeast.

NPFL fighters continue to act with impunity in their territory. The human rights abuses and intransigent attitude of the NPFL have constituted a serious obstacle to ECOMOG's efforts at peacekeeping.

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[3] The report went on to recommend that three soldiers be prosecuted in connection with the massacre. In September 1993, the interim government detained the three soldiers named in the report, but openly questioned the UN's findings. Reports indicate that the soldiers have been released, and no further action has been taken on this case.

The United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO)

ULIMO was formed in 1991 by AFL soldiers who fled to Sierra Leone. ULIMO's conduct in the areas it captures has included attacks on civilians, looting, and executions of suspected NPFL sympathizers. ULIMO has also denied freedom of movement in its areas, establishing checkpoints along the roads at which civilians and relief organizations have often faced harassment. On December 23, 1993, ULIMO attacked the United Nations base in Vahun in Lofa County: UN and nongovernmental organizations' vehicles were confiscated, and their warehouses were looted. The UN was forced to evacuate all its staff, in addition to 32 orphans. In March 1994, ULIMO split into two factions, Krahn versus Mandingo. The fighting in the western counties has been fierce, with civilians being targeted by both sides.

Documenting human rights conditions in ULIMO territory is difficult, because ULIMO has denied access to independent observers. All international relief groups have withdrawn from upper Lofa county since the December attack on the UN. Some ULIMO commanders have become virtually warlords. ULIMO is also believed to be responsible for cross-border attacks on Liberian refugees in Guinea.

The Liberian Peace Council (LPC)

The emergence in late 1993 of a new armed faction, the LPC, threatened to disrupt the peace process by attacking the NPFL. Reports indicate that the LPC is largely Krahn and includes many former AFL soldiers, some of whom had also fought with ULIMO.

In recent weeks, the LPC has stepped up its campaign against civilians. Displaced persons describe LPC abuses as systematic and gratuitous. Thousands of civilians have been displaced by the fighting, with some 40,000 registered in the city of Buchanan alone, according to international relief organizations. Testimony from displaced persons and foreign observers indicates that the LPC is responsible for serious human rights abuses against the civilian population, especially those the LPC considers to have supported the NPFL. Abuses include extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, rape, and looting.

The Role of ECOMOG

Human Rights Watch/Africa is concerned about consistent reports that members of the Nigerian contingent of ECOMOG -- not the Ugandans or the Ghanaians, who are also stationed in the Buchanan area -- are aiding the LPC. Displaced persons and foreign observers believe that the Nigerians are supplying arms and ammunition to the LPC as a way to weaken the NPFL, while profiteering on the side. The implications of this are very serious, even though it is not clear how high up the collaboration goes in the Nigerian contingent.

The hostility between NPFL and the Nigerian contingent of ECOMOG dates back to the initial ECOMOG intervention in August 1990, when Charles Taylor accused Nigeria's President Ibrahim Babangida of attempting to rescue Liberian President Doe, and has continued ever since. The NPFL has singled out the Nigerian contingent of ECOMOG as its main enemy, and has sought to humiliate the Nigerians whenever possible. Meanwhile, ECOMOG has been accused of aiding other Liberian factions in their fight against the NPFL. In October 1992, when the NPFL attacked Monrovia, there were many allegations that ECOMOG armed ULIMO and the AFL. Sources in the US government have confirmed that ECOMOG supplied -- or at least facilitated -- some arms transfers to the AFL and ULIMO. There were also many reports that ECOMOG provided transportation to ULIMO fighters.

A remarkably similar pattern of cooperation is emerging between elements of the Nigerian contingent of ECOMOG and the LPC. Residents of Buchanan report that LPC fighters have free run of the city, sometimes checking their weapons at an ECOMOG checkpoint at the outskirts of the city and reclaiming them when they leave. Some observers have reported a joint ECOMOG/LPC checkpoint, and displaced persons have seen the Nigerians transporting LPC fighters.

The Use of Child Soldiers

A very disturbing characteristic of the Liberian war has been the use of child soldiers. International law -- the Protocols of the Geneva Conventions and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child -- forbids the use of children under the age of fifteen as soldiers in armed conflict. The African Charter on the Rights of the Child has a higher threshold, stating that no one under the age of eighteen can serve in armed hostilities. In spite of these protections, thousands of children are being used as soldiers in Liberia.

There are no precise figures on the number of child soldiers in Liberia; even the total number of combatants in all the factions is unknown. Most observers estimate that between 40,000 and 60,000 combatants are involved in the conflict. In any event, UNICEF estimates that approximately 10 percent of the fighters are under the age of fifteen; some estimate that an additional 20 percent are under eighteen.

The main rebel factions -- the NPFL and ULIMO -- have consistently used children under the age of eighteen, including thousands under the age of fifteen. There have been reports that the LPC is also using child soldiers, although the lack of access to their territory makes confirmation difficult. As a result, many thousands of children in Liberia have suffered during the war; many have been killed or wounded, or have witnessed terrible atrocities. Moreover, many children have themselves committed atrocities, killing, maiming or raping civilians, and looting homes. Many were only ten years old when they joined in the fighting.

Some of the children were forcibly recruited by the warring factions, but the majority

apparently joined up voluntarily. When asked why they had joined, many explain that they joined to avenge the killing of family or friends, as a way to protect their families, or as a means of survival. All of the children were armed, usually with AK 47s. Thousands of them have fought on the front lines, used essentially as cannon-fodder.

Reintegrating these children into society is an immense problem. In some cases, their families have fled and no relatives can be found. In others, families have refused to take the children back because of what they have done. Most of the children had only a year or two of education before joining the fighting.

Human Rights Watch/Africa abhors the use of children as soldiers in Liberia, and urges all the warring factions to refrain from further use of children, and to immediately release those now serving. We also support efforts around the world to raise the minimum permissible age for soldiers from fifteen to eighteen.

The Refugees and Displaced

The situation of the displaced civilians, estimated at approximately 500,000, and residents in many parts of central and northern Liberia became increasingly desperate by late 1993 and into 1994. Relief assistance to these areas had been effectively cut off after the October 1992 offensive, although some food and medicine continued to flow through the Ivory Coast border. Relief groups found that up to 700,000 civilians in NPFL territory were in danger, with 200,000 already suffering starvation.

Meanwhile, an estimated 711,000 Liberians remained as refugees in the neighboring countries: 415,000 in Guinea; 250,000 in the Ivory Coast; 25,000 in Ghana; 17,000 in Sierra Leone; and 4,000 in Nigeria. (The war also displaced some 400,000 Sierra Leoneans, 170,000 of whom went to Guinea and 100,000 to Liberia.) The issue of repatriation of the refugees remained subject to progress on the political front and the resolution of certain security concerns, and as of April 1994 no significant repatriation had occurred.

The International Response

The June 1993 massacre at the Carter Camp in Harbel heightened attention to the Liberian war and set in motion a series of important international developments. On June 9, 1993, the UN Security Council condemned the massacre, requesting that the secretary-general launch an immediate investigation and warning that those responsible would be held accountable for their actions. On August 4, Boutros-Ghali ordered an independent inquiry into the Harbel massacre. A three-member panel, headed by Kenyan attorney general Amos Wako, visited Liberia in August and concluded that the massacre was "planned and executed by units of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL)."

Simultaneous with these initiatives, the peace process gained momentum. In a major breakthrough, on July 25 a peace agreement was signed in Cotonou, Benin by the NPFL,

ULIMO and IGNU. The accord followed UN-sponsored negotiations in Geneva involving representatives of all the factions. These negotiations were part of a series of peace talks spearheaded by Trevor Gordon-Somers, the Secretary General's Special Representative in Liberia. Representatives of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the OAU also served as sponsors of the Cotonou agreement. The accord called for a cease-fire on August 1, the formation of a transitional government, disarmament and encampment of combatant forces, followed by elections. The plan also involved the creation of a UN Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) to help supervise and monitor the agreement, in conjunction with ECOMOG and an expanded ECOMOG force.

U.S. Policy

After years of supporting the brutal and corrupt regime of former President Doe in the 1980s, making it the largest recipient of U.S. aid in sub-Saharan Africa, the U.S. largely withdrew from Liberia once the war began in 1990. Toward the end of 1993, however when it became clear that the latest peace plan required substantial U.S. assistance if it was to succeed, Liberia finally became a higher priority.

The main tenets of U.S. policy toward Liberia are to support conflict resolution efforts by ECOWAS and the UN, to withhold recognition of any government in Liberia, and to promote ECOWAS and its peace plan. By the end of 1993, the conflict resolution efforts had gained new momentum. On September 30, the U.S. obligated $19.83 million ($13 million in Economic Support Funds and the rest in Foreign Military Financing) to the UN Trust Fund for peacekeeping in Liberia. The money would be used by ECOMOG and the OAU to help finance the deployment of the expanded ECOMOG troops, but not for lethal assistance. On December 20, 1993, the U.S. allocated an additional $11 million in support for the UN-monitored African peacekeeping operation in Liberia.

The U.S. was the leading donor to the victims of the war: since the beginning of the conflict, the U.S. had provided some $320 million in humanitarian assistance to victims of the conflict, including more than $57 million in fiscal year 1993. An additional $28.7 million had been provided since April 1991 to assist the ECOWAS-led peace process.

Although the U.S. government acted quickly to condemn the June 1993 massacre in Harbel and to welcome the Cotonou peace agreement, it did not stress adequately the human rights component of the crisis. The U.S. should have made clear to all the warring factions that human rights issues would directly impact U.S. foreign assistance to any future government, and that the U.S. would distance itself from any force that continued to violate human rights and international law.

The U.S. has been aware of the human rights problems associated with the ECOMOG intervention, yet U.S. policy still revolved around full support for ECOMOG. The U.S. must make clear its concern about human rights violations by elements of ECOMOG, and conditions U.S. aid on respect for human rights.

The U.S. deserves credit for pushing the UN to include a human rights component to UNOMIL's mandate. Although the language was not as strong as might have been hoped -- it did not establish a human rights office or provide for the deployment of human rights monitors -- at least the UN resolution acknowledged officially that reporting on human rights violations was part of UNOMIL's mandate in Liberia.

On two occasions in 1994, the U.S. sent officials to Liberia -- in January, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Prudence Bushnell, and in February, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, George Moose. Both visits involved meetings with representatives of the main warring factions and were meant to deliver a message that the U.S. had limited patience, and that the factions had to move forward on the peace process. Shortly thereafter, the factions announced their agreement about the seating of the LNTG.

The UN Role

After finally addressing the Liberian crisis in November 1992 and imposing an arms embargo (Security Council Resolution 788), the secretary-general dispatched his special representative, Gordon-Somers, to investigate the situation. Human rights has been notably absent from his statements, and he has missed many opportunities to insert human rights protections into the peace process.

After the Harbel massacre in June 1993, Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali condemned the killings and instructed Gordon-Somers to conduct an investigation into the incident. While this quick response by the UN was welcome, it was ultimately undercut by the fact that Gordon-Somers's report to the secretary-general was not published, or his findings revealed. Questions were raised as to why the secretary-general chose to send Gordon-Somers, when his role as a mediator of the conflict precluded him from making any findings that would antagonize any of the warring factions. However, a second investigation was ordered by the secretary-general, and its findings were published.

On September 22, the Security Council adopted Resolution 866 establishing the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) for seven months. UNOMIL was to comprise approximately 500 members, some 300 being military, and its primary purpose was military: to monitor the cease-fire, the arms embargo, and disarmament and demobilization of combatants. In addition, UNOMIL was to observe the electoral process, help coordinate humanitarian relief and report "any major violations of international humanitarian law to the secretary-general." This last aspect was particularly welcome, but it would have been important to specify the need to report on violations of human rights and humanitarian law.

In April 1994, the United Nations Security Council extended UNOMIL's mandate for another six months, with the proviso that the situation be reviewed on May 18 and June 30. This provides an important opportunity to re-examine UNOMIL's progress and purpose, and reinforce the need for its mandate to be implemented.

UNOMIL has not been reporting publicly on either the violations of the cease-fire in the southeast or violations of humanitarian law, although apparently reports are being sent to New York. UNOMIL is itself restricted in its movements, and has not been able to conduct investigations into reported violations. However, by avoiding the human rights issues, the UN is failing to discharge its mandate in Liberia.

The UN mission in Liberia constitutes one of the only means of exerting pressure on the warring factions, as well as on the Nigerians, to halt this downward spiral. The UN must implement its mandate: UN observers are authorized to report on violations of the cease-fire and of humanitarian law, and they must protest publicly when they are restricted in their movements.

In addition, the new human rights officer for UNOMIL must engage in active human rights monitoring, so that human rights violations can be documented and their perpetrators identified.

Friends of Liberia

United States Policy and Liberia

Observations and Recommendations

Written Testimony
of
Kevin George, President
Friends of Liberia

before the

House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on Africa

May 18, 1994

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Attachment: About Friends of Liberia

Written testimony of:

Kevin George, President
Friends of Liberia

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee, for the opportunity to share my views on the situation in Liberia. I testify today in my capacity as President of Friends of Liberia (FOL).

FOL has dedicated itself to helping Liberians achieve peace and democracy. Our eight-hundred members include returned Peace Corps volunteers, Foreign Service officers, missionaries, development workers, expatriate Liberians, and others who care deeply about the welfare of the people of Liberia. During Liberia's civil war the organization has conducted five fact-finding missions, provided over $100,000 in publicly raised funds to relief and medical assistance, brought the warring factions together in public forums and conflict resolution workshops, and advocated for effective U.S. government policies. FOL intends on providing a delegation of fifty-four members to monitor future elections in Liberia.

I have visited Liberia on three occasions over the course of this war and followed events in the country on a daily basis. During my visit last month I participated in an effort to bring representatives of the warring factions into a conflict resolution process. I also met with a wide range of notable persons from all factions involved in the war and the Chair of the Transitional State Council, Mr. David Kpomakpor. No less important to me has been the opportunity to speak frankly with ordinary Liberians whose lives have been most effected by the war.

Liberia's Importance to the United States

I believe it is important to share with you my feelings about the relationship shared by the United States and Liberia before moving on to the important points that the Subcommittee has asked me to address.

Over a dozen years ago I served in Liberia as a Peace Corps Volunteer, as did over three-thousand other Americans. Because of my service in the Peace Corps I gained an appreciation for the strong historical ties between the people of Liberia and the United States. The regrettable paradox of this relationship is that Americans generally have little awareness of Liberia.

This paradox came home to me at the start of the conflict in Liberia. I travelled, along with concerned members of FOL, to the State Department six times during the course of 1990 to urge officials to fully utilize the diplomatic resources of the U.S. Government to help bring peace to Liberia. We were not asking for military intervention, just that the U.S. do its best to mediate an end to the conflict. Repeatedly we were told that Liberia was not a vital interest of the U.S. government and the U.S. would not attempt to play the role of mediator. We were told that there was no constituency in the U.S. for Liberia and that Liberia would remain on the back burner. On more than one occasion Liberians pleading for U.S. intervention were told, like we were, that the special relationship that we thought existed between Liberia and the United States was nothing but a perceived relationship by Liberians.

Too often the relationship between Liberia and the United States is glossed over without careful thought to

the unique characteristics of the relationship and the obligations that go with it. If we downplay the relationship, as we have during the past four years, then our policies in respect to Liberia will continue to be deficient.

The relationship between the United States and Liberia is genuine and continues despite the disappointment that Liberians feel over the failure of U.S. diplomacy during the civil war. Liberia's governments have at times failed to live up to our expectations. However, Liberians, as a people, have never failed us in their friendship. Indeed, Liberians during the "cold war" welcomed a U.S. presence in their country when such a presence was not popular or even possible in most African countries. In short, history and one-hundred and fifty years of friendship have linked Liberia and the United States in a way that cannot be ignored by the politics of today. We are part and parcel of what has been called Liberia's "unresolved past."

As an American, I feel shame that my government deliberately chose not to assume a leadership role in helping to resolve the civil war in Liberia. I was angry when Secretary Moose's predecessor, testifying before this subcommittee in June 1990, definitively stated that the U.S. would not become a mediator in Liberia and not one member of the subcommittee challenged his statement. These feelings were compounded when I realize that our support of the Doe regime, even after the fraudulent elections of 1985, contributed to the failure of governance that eventually led to the outbreak of civil war. Given these failures in our foreign policy, I wonder why it took so long after the Cotonou Agreement for the State Department to identify funding for the expansion of the African peacekeeping force.

In fairness to the people of Liberia the United States government must decide whether it wants to continue in a special relationship. If so, then Liberia must be a priority on our foreign relations agenda. If not, then can we as a nation hope to convince the rest of Africa that we have their interests at heart?

I would now like to turn to the specific points the Subcommittee has asked me to address. First, I will share my observations about current conditions in Liberia. Second, I will suggest a course of action to be taken by the United States Government.

I. The Current Transition Process

The Prospects for Peace: Disarmament and Demobilization

The seating on March 7 of the Liberian National Transitional Government, the first government recognized by all the major warring factions in four years of war, is a first step towards peace in Liberia. Under the Cotonou Agreement this government is to have a six-month life span culminating with elections on September 7, 1994. These elections, however, were predicated on a successful program of disarmament.

Over two months has passed since the seating of the Transitional Government and disarmament has been halted due to fighting between factions. The Liberian Peace Council and the National Patriotic Front continue to battle one another in the southeast of the country. A severe split within ULIMO has also resulted in an explosion of fighting between Krahn and Mandingo in the area to the north of Monrovia.

The continued fighting has brought great disappointment to the people of Liberia and, understandably,

concern among the international community. It is my opinion that the entire transitional process will be at great risk if a ceasefire among the warring factions cannot be secured in the near future.

There is reason to believe that Liberians can overcome these obstacles to peace. ULIMO and the NPFL appear to be firmly committed to the Cotonou Agreement which brought all the parties to the Agreement (ULIMO, NPFL, and IGNU) into a power-sharing arrangement. The cabinet positions in the new government have been filled and the five-member Council of State is functioning. The Krahn and Mandingo factions of ULIMO are meeting in an attempt to resolve their differences. There are also rumors that the NPFL and LPC have also engaged in a dialogue. The expansion of ECOMOG to include troops from Tanzania and Uganda has bolstered the credibility of this force that is primarily responsible for disarmament. The United Nations has also deployed three hundred and sixty-eight unharmed military observers.

Liberia is at the brink of peace but could, without the necessary attention, slip back into a state of anarchy. The fighting continues not only because factional leaders are vying for power. Suspicion between all factions is still extremely high. Factions are still not sure that they can trust one another. The Krahn, a tribe closely connected to the Doe regime and the force behind the LPC, seems to believe it has been left out of the transitional process and has expressed fear for its security as an ethnic group. These factors are influencing the continuation of the conflict and need to be addressed.

It should be obvious that this is not the time for the international community to even consider backing away from its commitment to peace in Liberia. The United Nations, with the strong cooperation of the United States, should bolster its diplomatic resources, which are minimal at present in Liberia, and help provide the options that will move Liberians from the battlefield to the ballot box.

The Electoral Process

In order for elections to be free and fair a number of critical steps must take place. Approximately 30,000 combatants in Liberia must be disarmed. Over 700,000 Liberians, a third of Liberia's population, must be repatriated. The seven-member Election Commission of Liberia has the daunting task of organizing itself, registering parties and voters, conducting civic education, and carrying-out the elections. I do not believe that these steps can be accomplished by September 7.

The Cotonou Agreement envisioned a six-month transition period leading up to elections. In order to take full advantage of this six-month period to prepare for elections the Transitional Government must have authority over all territory in Liberia. Obviously this authority does not presently exist and cannot be exercised until fighting has ceased and combatants are disarmed. It makes sense for the parties to the Cotonou Agreement to redefine the six-month period leading to elections in a way that does not weaken the intent of the parties to have a transitional government with a relatively short lifespan. I believe that there is considerable support in Liberia for a six-month timetable that commences with the start of disarmament.

It would, however, be the wrong approach for the United States government or the international community to make electoral assistance to Liberia contingent on the start of disarmament. Despite the continued fighting in portions of the country, there is a significant amount of activity that should be taking place to support the electoral process. This includes technical assistance to the Election Commission and

preparation for civic education. We should take advantage of this period to at least initiate assistance that will create an effective, creditable and united Election Commission.

There is another reason to begin the process of providing electoral assistance to Liberia. It is important at this delicate period for the international community to fully support the Transitional Government. Sending the right signals to that government and to the parties that share a role in it is critical to the peace process. A delay in providing electoral assistance or on conditioning such assistance on moving back the date for elections could have the effect of weakening support for the Transitional Government. In short, we should now do everything possible to facilitate the shift of power from the factions to the Transitional Government.

ECOMOG: A Model for Regionally Based Peacekeeping?

The role of ECOMOG in Liberia has often been cited as a model for regional peacekeeping. It is, however, not a model without flaws.

The initial ECOWAS military intervention was successful in terms of ending the fighting in late 1990. This was a major achievement that saved lives, greatly reduced the intensity of human rights violations, and allowed the opportunity for the warring parties to negotiate for a ceasefire. However, the intervention and the regionally imposed peace process that ensued suffered from problems which, at times called into question the partiality of the ECOMOG force, resulting in a failure to maintain high levels of trust and respect for the ECOWAS process among the warring factions and even among some ECOWAS member states. These problems are summarized as follows.

1. The lack of a strong legal basis in the ECOWAS Charter establishing authority for the peacekeeping unit.

2. Failure of ECOWAS to mold the necessary coalition of key member states in support of its peace plan and to balance the ECOMOG force with military units from these members.

3. Premature installation of an interim government causing polarization of political factions within Liberia.

4. Lack of close cooperation between ECOWAS and the U.N. Security Council at the intervention stage in 1990.

5. Failure to control fighting between parties not specifically covered by the ceasefire agreement, and to expand the peace process to cover instances of conflict/aggression against neighboring states, eg. Sierra Leone.

6. The appearance of siding with or supporting certain factions during the course of the war.

I do not wish to be misunderstood. ECOWAS and ECOMOG played a vital role when the United States and the United Nations virtually ignored Liberia. ECOMOG is a peacekeeping force that is widely respected by a majority of Liberians. Adding to its appeal is the fact that it is an all-African force. The expansion of ECOMOG to include troops from Tanzania and Uganda has added to its credibility as a

peacekeeper with the perceived impartiality necessary to disarm a diverse number of Liberian factions.

I fear, however, that the willingness of a regional organization like ECOWAS to commit itself to peacekeeping will be used, as it was in Liberia, as an excuse by the international community to not involve itself in a corresponding role. Regional organizations and their peacekeeping units have a critical role to play in efforts by the world community in helping to resolve internal conflicts. These organizations can supply peacekeeping forces, prod the Security Council into action, and minimize regional tension caused by the war.

At the same time there are basic problems inherent in processes of peacemaking and peacekeeping by regional organizations, particularly internally under-developed and under-financed organizations like ECOWAS. One of the most basic of these problems is that regional organizations are apt to carry an abundance of political baggage which they must overcome if they are to succeed in resolving a civil conflict within a member state. They have the potential to become so embroiled in the conflict that truly collective action is extremely difficult. This is one reason why it is especially dangerous for regional organizations to initiate peacekeeping operations on their own.

The military and financial capacities of regional organizations like ECOWAS are also lacking and are a practical reason for not making regional organizations solely responsible for policing civil wars. For example, although the ECOMOG force in Liberia had superior fighting equipment, the force faced a chronic lack of basic supplies like food. Nigerian soldiers, in particular, relied upon relief supplies originally destined for the civilian population. It was reported that some ECOMOG soldiers even resorted to looting of goods to support themselves. Military and communications hardware were also lacking. ECOMOG checkpoints in key buffer zones between Monrovia and the NPFL forces could not communicate to headquarters when NPFL forces began attacks in October, 1992, because they had not been supplied communications equipment, a basic necessity for any monitoring group.

I am of the opinion that future peacekeeping measures in Africa, in order to be effective, should involve regionally based peacekeeping units working in cooperation with peacekeeping units from the United Nations. That balance of approach and of forces is important. The OAU, and subregional organizations such as ECOWAS, have their greatest potential value if intervention is under the aegis of the United Nations. However, to exclusively defer to regional organizations, as initially happened in the case of Liberia, risks slowing down or even preventing timely and vigorous diplomatic action by the United Nations.

Humanitarian Needs and Reconstruction

Large scale starvation in Liberia has been avoided because of the well-organized efforts of international organizations, assisted by local non-governmental organizations, to distribute U.S. donated rice. However, Liberians living in the far-off areas of the country, like Grand Gedeh County, Maryland County, and Lofa County, have been isolated by the continued fighting and almost certainly face food shortages. Despite the best efforts of relief agencies there is no accurate assessment of the severity of food shortages in these areas. The worst should be expected. There is the possibility, if fighting continues, that the level of need in these areas will require a more animated response including relief convoys protected by U.N. or

ECOMOG troops or airlifts into these remote areas.

There are encouraging signs in Liberia. After four years, children are once again attending schools in Monrovia. Their schools lack electricity, roofs and books, but the routine of being in school gives Liberians and their children a sense of normalcy. The severe lack of basic educational tools ranges across the spectrum of educational institutions from primary schools to the universities. The University of Liberia has almost no desks and chairs, books are practically non-existent, half of the buildings on campus have been destroyed and the faculty serves without pay. The 126 students at the law school compete for sixteen chairs and a handful of available law books, but classes continue.

The growth of non-governmental organizations and community groups in Liberia is also encouraging. These organizations are forming to meet a variety of humanitarian and civic needs. Some promote peace and democracy, other assist in food distribution, and still others develop programs to assist children affected psychologically and physically by the war.

There is still tremendous physical suffering especially among the one-third of the population that is displaced within the country. Another third of the population is living under equally miserably conditions in neighboring countries. Almost every structure in Monrovia still standing is pock-marked with bullet holes and bears witness to the massive amounts of firepower involved in this war. Four years of war has destroyed much of the infrastructure of the country.

Humanitarian relief assistance may be needed for many years in Liberia. However, Liberians yearn to be brought out of the periphery and into the circle of relief and rehabilitation planning and distribution. They want to find a way to help themselves and have started to envision the transition that will be needed to move from dependency on international relief assistance to self-sufficiency and reconstruction of their nation. The United States and the international community should encourage this self-reliance and begin planning how it can assist Liberians in this transition.

II. U.S. Government Policy: A Recommended Course of Action

I believe that there is an opportunity for the United States government to initiate new and positive elements into its foreign policy that foster peace, democracy and reconstruction in Liberia.

As the largest donor organization to Liberia now and in the past, the United States has a strong interest in a Liberia that is peaceful, democratic and economically viable. The historic relationship of the United States and Liberia also engenders certain mutual obligations.

A. Achieving Peace

The policy of the United States government in respect to Liberia should continue to emphasize an immediate ceasefire, disarmament by all Liberian warring parties, internal security, respect for human rights, and, the holding of free and fair elections. There are specific actions that the United States can take to achieve these goals.

Cooperation with the United Nations and OAU

The United Nations has taken the primary role as mediator in Liberia. To a large degree this has meant that the United States has played a behind-the-scenes role. This role has apparently been important in terms of achieving subtle yet positive results. While taking these positive actions, the United States government appears to resist the appearance that it is a partner with the United Nations. It may be the appropriate time for the United States to move its diplomacy to a higher level of visibility without, of course, interfering with the role of the United Nations. This could be accomplished by the appointment of a special envoy by President Clinton to work on a daily basis with the representatives of the U.N. Secretary-General and the OAU.

Free and Fair Elections. The United States government should promote free and fair elections in Liberia as the key element of its Liberia policy. To do so, it must be prepared to support the undergirding of democratic institutions at every level in the country. It cannot do this effectively without sufficient levels of funding. It must also fully support the efforts of American organizations that are prepared to provide assistance to the electoral process.

High-Level Recognition of Liberia as a Concern of the United States.

The relationship between Liberia and the United States has often been called a special relationship because of the historic roots of the Republic of Liberia. Liberians continue to have tremendous respect and admiration for the United States despite disappointment over the United States' failure to play an official role in efforts to end their civil war.

Unfortunately, Liberia has not been high on the list of foreign affairs priorities for either the Bush or Clinton administrations. The highest ranking officials of the United States government have ignored Liberia in their public comments. This lack of high-level concern for Liberia among the top leadership of the United States government has been perceived by Liberians as abandonment and may have fostered a continuation of the conflict.

President Clinton and Secretary of State Warren Christopher should actively encourage the parties to the conflict in Liberia to observe a ceasefire. A public statement by President Clinton would go a long way toward assuring Liberians that they have not been abandoned by the United States and that peace in their country is a priority of the United States government.

B. Reconstruction

Liberians have the ultimate responsibility for rebuilding and reunifying their nation under a democratic form of governance. It is clear, however, that the international community, and particularly the United States, has an obligation to help Liberia move forward after four years of war. The Washington Post, in a recent editorial, succinctly described this obligation. "For historical reasons, and by dint of American indulgence of the dreadful Doe regime," said the Post, "few countries have a greater claim on American concern than Liberia. If Liberians are willing to stay the course, this country should help."

Liberians cannot wait to start the job of rehabilitating water and electric systems or to rebuild roads, bridges, schools and clinics. The catch is that Liberia does not have the resources to even consider beginning this job.

The country's external debt is said to total 3.5 billion dollars including approximately $ 221 million owed to the United States government, $ 600 million to the IMF and $120 million to the World Bank. Its revenues in the coming year will be minuscule and will cover only a fraction of what it would take to run a government in "normal" times.

The United States has provided humanitarian assistance, primarily food, over the four years of war valued at $320 million by the State Department. Almost $31 million has been provided since January to support the expansion of the existing African peacekeeping force in Liberia to include 1700 Tanzanian and Ugandan troops.

But other money, urgently needed to prepare Liberia for elections and to start the task of rehabilitation, has been painfully hard to find. For example, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has received only a fraction of the $39.2 million it sought last November to prepare for the repatriation of Liberian refugees. Even the $31 million provided for peacekeeping took months for the State Department to squeeze from other budgets and delayed the deployment of the expanded ECOMOG by five months. Money that should be supporting U.S. organizations to provide assistance for reconstruction and the electoral process has yet to be designated.

Legal and bureaucratic obstacles are also preventing U.S. assistance that is urgently needed. One obstacle is the Brook-Alexander Amendment, the law that prevents most types of assistance until arrears are eliminated on debt owed to the U.S. Because there are only a few limited exceptions to the Brook Amendment, the U.S. government can only provide funds for emergency humanitarian assistance and for other very limited purposes such as support for peacekeeping and programs that support democracy. No funds are being spent by the U.S. government on reconstruction. This is a terrible shame and a wasted opportunity. Reconstruction assistance will not only have the obvious benefit of rebuilding infrastructure. Such assistance will also create jobs, in a country where unemployment is over 97-percent, and start a healing process that is important psychologically for the country.

There is another problem, one that has frustrated FOL throughout the war. This is the lack of support for a dynamic approach to U.S. assistance to Liberia. The "action plan" that FOL called for last May in policy papers submitted to the State Department and the Senate Subcommittee on African Affairs has not materialized. This action plan should identify the linkage of economic development, reconstruction and democratic governance, and the extent that the United States government will support the reconstruction of a "new" Liberia. This action plan should be developed now so that assistance to Liberia can begin flowing once there is peace.

I am convinced that Congress has a critical role in making available sufficient levels of assistance for reconstruction in Liberia. Legislation, such as H.R. 4238, introduced by Congressman Floyd Flake last month, must be enacted. Such legislation not only provides a generous level of support for relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction in Liberia, but sends a clear signal of Congressional support for Liberia.

The transitional period in Liberia will set the stage for Liberia to emerge from the ashes of a horrendous

civil war. This new Liberia could be a model of democratic governance, economic growth, social justice and the observation of human rights. The country, without the appropriate commitment from its citizens and the international community, could just as easily slip into the malaise of the past characterized by corrupt and unrepresentative government, a lack of economic growth, and social injustice - all root causes of Liberia's civil war.

So Liberia's future depends on more than the resolve of its people and the good wishes of its friends. The United States government must lead the way for the international community. It must move quickly to provide the significant support needed in this delicate period of transition if peace and democracy are to become a reality in Liberia.

Conclusions

Because of its special standing, the United States government has opportunities, unavailable to other governments and organizations, to promote peace, democracy and reconstruction in Liberia. As citizens of the United States who have lived and served in Liberia, the 800 members of Friends of Liberia believe that our government's heightened involvement in Liberia is critical and long-overdue.

Mr. Chairman, I urge you and the members of the Subcommittee to take a leading role in shaping new and positive dimensions to U.S. policy on Liberia.

Friends of Liberia

ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

Friends of Liberia (FOL) is a nonprofit, nonpolitical organization whose members are dedicated toward supporting social and economic development in Liberia, promoting friendship and understanding between the people of the United States and Liberia, and strengthening the growth of democracy and democratic institutions in Liberia. The organization was founded in 1986.

Friends of Liberia's driving force is the dedication of its more than 800 members. They include returned Peace Corps volunteers, Foreign Service officers, missionaries, development workers, expatriate Liberians, and others who are concerned about the welfare of the people of Liberia. Members use their skills in law, communications, administration, technology, political science, education, diplomacy, and health to design and marshall support for projects geared toward the needs of people throughout Liberia.

PAST AND ONGOING FOL ACTIVITIES

Support for Relief and Reconstruction

Since 1990 FOL has committed over $100,000 in publicly raised funds for direct relief to Liberian refugees in Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, and displaced persons and orphans in Liberia. The relief program has been directed at supporting orphanages and youth shelters in Monrovia, self-help agricultural activities for refugees in the Cote d'Ivoire, and scholarships for refugee children in Sierra Leone. FOL provides medical equipment and supplies to hospitals in Liberia, and sent Dr. Meda Colvin, a physician, to Liberia for two tours of duty in 1991-1993.

FOL seeks to expand its humanitarian role by implementing three multi-year projects to assist in the reconstruction of Liberia.

- *Street Children/Youth at Risk Outreach Project*: addresses the needs of displaced, orphaned and other war affected youth.
- *Womens Resource Center in a Liberian Urban Center*: targets women who have been traumatized by the war and is designed to facilitate their re-entry into the mainstream of society.
- *Local Initiatives for Relief and Rehabilitation*: would provide funds and organizational support to community groups for small-scale local relief and rehabilitation initiatives to reduce the dependency of Liberians by enabling them to take an active part in relief and rehabilitation activities.

These projects, largely staffed by Liberians, will be geared towards maximizing the involvement of Liberians in the reconstruction and development of their country.

Campaign to Raise Public Awareness

FOL activities include advocacy to bring to the attention of the United States the desperate plight of Liberians after more than four years of civil war. FOL serves as a conduit through which information about Liberia can be disseminated to the public and its members. The Friends of Liberia newsletter serves a crucial role in providing information about events in Liberia and FOL activities, and has been recognized as one of the most comprehensive sources of information on Liberia published in the United States.

In August 1991, FOL sponsored a public forum in Washington, D.C. on the future of Liberia, and brought together high ranking representatives from all sides of the Liberian conflict for the first time in the United States.

FOL's video documentary on the war in Liberia (July 1991) provided many Americans with their first glimpse of the war and its effect on the people of Liberia. FOL is frequently called upon to provide information to Congressional offices and committees, the media, and non-governmental organizations.

FOL has taken a leading role in supporting legislation and policies that benefit Liberia. FOL and its members were instrumental in the establishment of Temporary Protected Status for Liberians in the United States. Its letter writing and advocacy campaign resulted in the passage by the U.S. Congress of Joint Resolution 271, authorizing reprogramming of U.S. foreign aid appropriations for assistance to support the peace process and democracy in Liberia. After a June 1993 mission to Liberia, FOL presented testimony before the Senate Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on African Affairs about conditions in Liberia and recommendations for U.S. policy. The organization has held over twenty meetings with policy-makers at the U.S. Department of State.

Democracy - Election Monitoring - Conflict Resolution

FOL is a member organization of Project Liberia, a consortium of American organizations committed to providing support for peace, free elections and democracy in Liberia. An observer mission of fifty-four members will be sent by FOL to monitor the forthcoming elections in Liberia. FOL, in cooperation with the Carter Center, is also providing support for the peace process through a series of conflict resolution and reconciliation workshops.

FOL is guided by the belief that Liberia can achieve lasting peace and prosperity through democratic governance.

Affiliations and Recognition

FOL is a private voluntary organization recognized by the U.S. Agency for International Development and a member of InterAction, the association of international humanitarian organizations. Affiliated with the National Peace Corps Association, FOL was the recipient of that organization's Loret Ruppe Award for 1993, presented to the outstanding affiliated group. The organization has received numerous awards from Liberian community groups in the United States in recognition of its good works.

LIBERIA'S TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY

BY ABRAHAM L. JAMES

STATEMENT MADE DURING A TESTIMONY TO THE SUB COMMMITTEE ON AFRICA, COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, HOUSE OF RESPRESENTATIVES, CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES WASHINGTON D.C.

MAY 18, 1994

Mr. Chairman and members of the sub committee on Africa, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representauves, Congress of the United States, ladies and gentlemen:

I am deeply honored by your invitation to testify before this important and distinguished committee on Liberia's Transition to Democracy. It is topic which is uppermost on the minds of Liberians and friends of Liberia everywhere today.

Introduction

In the literature on the founding of the Liberian nation it is suggested that Liberia's birth as a nation was "Unique." In March 1819, The Congress of the United States allotted the resourcesk for the establishment of the entity which subsequently became the Republic of Liberia. The bonds of friendship that have existed between Liberia and the United States dating from that period are based on kinship, history and culture. They have involved cooperation and colaboration during the Second World War, and important periods of the cold war that followed. They are ties that cannot be destroyed by reason of the absence of war or peace.

The April 14, 1980 military intervention which brought an end to more than a century of constitutional government in Liberia and the attendant civil war of December 1990, led by Mr. Charles Taylor, to bring an end to the tyranny of the Doe regime have brought about conssiderable loss of lives, suffering and a collosal destruction of property in Liberia. Thousands of Liberians have been killed and thousands more have been displaced and traumatized. The Liberian economy is in shambles.

The Intervention of ECOWAS

In order to appreciate the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group's (ECOMOG) to the peace process in Liberia, one would have to imagine Liberia without ECOMOG. The fighting in the Liberia civil war became too fierce and destructive, resulting in a decision of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to intervene in Liberia on humanitarian grounds. Law and order had broken down, thousands of people had been killed, including many foreigners, and many thousands more had fled the country which was then in a state of anarchy. There was also fear that the chaos would spread to other parts of the region. Consequently, a peacekeeping force of (ECOMOG) drawn from seven African states arrived in Liberia in August, 1990 to impose an unsteady peace.They took the risk afforded with difficulty of committing men and resources to arrest the violence at a point in time when no one else was willing to go in. ECOMOG's involvement in Liberia has been a remarkable experiment in collective peacekeeping at the regional level. With amazing forbearance, the group has tried to stem the tide of violence. It has helped to provide the region with an important measure of stability. Under the steady leadership of President Nicephore Soglo of Benin, its current Chairman, ECOWAS has made important contributions to be Liberian peace process, especially in alleviating the tragic human suffering, which has marked the Liberian conflict.

A successful outcome of the Liberian conflict would provide a model for other regions and also encourage greater cooperation at the regional level in conflict resolution and peacekeeping in trouble areas in other parts of Africa and the Third World.

UN-ECOWAS Cooperation

With the evolution of time the peacekeeping operations in Liberia have undergone an important change. Today, we have a small team of United Nations military observers_ United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL)_ and civilian personnel operating under a UN Security Council Resolution, working with the African Sub-regional ECOMOG peace keeping force. The ECOMOG team has been beefed up by troops from Tanzania and Uganda and are undertaking the disarming of National Patriotic Front of Liberia Forces (NPFL), the United Liberation Movement (ULIMO), and other warring factions, under the peace accord signed in Cotonou, Benin. An operation which started as a experiment in regional collective peacekeeping has now become a shared responsibility between ECOWAS and the UN in the maintenance of peace and security Associating the Organization of African Unity (OAU) with the process adds another dimension to it.

The Liberian National Transitional Council

The Liberian National Transitional Council (LNTC) has an important responsibility of laying the foundation for nomality in Liberia. The new council of state is composed of respresentatives from the three factions, the NPFL, ULIMO and the former Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU), which was backed by the armed forces of Liberia and the local defense regiments. At the time of the induction into office of the members of the LNTC, hopes were raised that the new administration would be able to get on with its work of governing much better than the previous interim government, in view of its broad-based nature. It is necessary to note that as a collegiate body in which decisions are arrived at through consensus, LNTC is sometumes prevented from taking urgent and important decisions.

The council appears to be having difficulty in trying to consolidate its authority, due mainly to the constraints brought about by the failure of each factional leader to relinquish control in his respective territory and sphere of influence. The architects of the peace accord had hoped that after the council was established, the power bases of the heads of the warring factions would be dismantled. Regrettably, this has not happened and the factional leaders are still attempting to hold on to power and even trying to micromanage the affairs of governing which should really be within the exclusive domains of the council.

It was also felt that once the new administration was installed, the council would be able to extend its authority and mandate to all parts of the territory of Liberia. The fact is that most of the country, excluding Monrovia, is still under the control of the warring factions. Until this situation is changed, it is difficult to foresee how the leadership of the council can consolidate its power and govern the country as a unified state.

The LNTG has also been stymied as the factions vie over the "interim spoils of war." There has been a long dispute among the factions about sharing the portfolios of finance, foreign affairs, justice and defense. This will hardly be possible before the fighters in the various areas of the country are disarmed.

Prospects for Disarmament and Demobilization

It is in a discordant atmosphere that the peacekeepers are attempting to disarm an estimated 25,000 to 60,000 rebels_UN and aid workers estimates differ. Many of the combatants are children who have known nothing but the rule of the gun for four years. The UN and the workers have arranged for each rebel to receive food, clothes, tools, medical care and career and psychological counseling, after surrendering himself and his weapon at one of the designated encampment sites.

Since the signing of the peace accord in July, 1993, at least four splinter rebel factions have emerged. They include the Liberian Peace Council led by Dr. George Boley, the Lofa Defense Force (LDF), the Bong Regiment (BR) and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF).

The emergence of these groups has led to the disruption of the disarmament process due continuing fighting between the LPC and Taylor's NPFL fighters in the southeastern part of the country near the Liberia Agriculstural Company (LAC). ia Agricultural Company (LAC) near Buchanan and in Sinoe and Grand Gedeh Counties and also in Sinoe ' Grand Gedeh counties.

The LPC, which is not a party to the peace accord, is determined to get to Taylor's headquarters at Gbarnga and the conflict has provided an excuse for fighters in the southeast not to disarm. Only 175 of the combatants in the area disarmed to Ugandan troops of the Expanded ECOMOG in the third week after March 7. Because of the threat posed by the fighting LPC and NPFL forces, urgent efforts are being made by ECOMOG to deploy troops to separate and disarm the two groups. The LPC, which was one of the last major warring factors to emerge, is also laying claim to substantial territory without having been given a role in the political settlement of the crisis. This reality portends serious dangers for the peace process.

Disarmament_ Voluntary and Otherwise

More than two months after the start of the March 7 disarmament of warring factions, UN and ECOMOG official figures show only a small number, not more than 2,000 fighters, have disarmed voluntarily to ECOMOG at all the encampment sites across the country. The political process - the seating of the Transitional Council _ has fast outstripped the military prospects - disarmament. There appears to be a noticeable hesitation of NPFL and ULIMO leaders to disarm readily.

All the parties involved should be made to understand that disarmament will be achieved either voluntarily or by resorting to the application of enforcement measures.

Under the Cotonou Peace Accord, ECOMOG High Command, made up of officers from Ghana, Nigeria, Guinea, Mali, and the Gambia under General Inieger, retains enforcement powers against threats from any quarters to the peace process. A recent move and show of force into ULIMO held areas is a good example of how methods other than voluntary disarmament might be used to achieve the desire result in the disarmament process.

Differences between the ULIMO Chairman, Alhaji Kromah, a Mandingo, and the Chairman of ULIMO's military wing, General Roosevelt Johnson, a Krahn, erupted into fighting between their supporters in Tubmanburg, capital of Bomi County, and the surrounding areas. Reports indicate that supporters of General Johnson, who had earlier announced the removal of Alhaji Kromah, attacked Tubmanburg. The attack was witnesed by UN military observers stationed there, resulted in running battles between the two ethnic groups and the death of many residents in the area.

In a prompt response to public outcry and condemnation of the violence the ECOMOG Peacekeeping Force Field Commander, Major-General Inieger, ordered tanks and troops into the ULIMO are to prevent further violence and disruption of the process. Within 24 hours of

moving Tubmanburg, ECOMOG troops, under the command of Lt. Col. N.C.8 Baji from Nigeria backed by tanks from Guinea and Nigeria took positions in the two counties, Bomi and Cape Mount, lying next to the Sierra Leone border It is important to mentioned that the move attained a crucial schedule in the Cotonou Peace Accord which called for the establishment of a buffer zone between Liberia and Sierra Leone. In the latest deployment in the western region to separate the two ULIMO factions and stop infiltration from Sierra Leone of armed elements, ECOMOG troops established positions at Bo Waterside, Tienne and at the volatile Kongo area, where RUF rebels, the Lofa Defence Force, and ULIMO fighters are constantly battling each other for control.

Effect of Intra ULIMO Fighting

The United Liberation Movement is plagued with an internal conflict. The two main ethnic groups, Mandingos and Krahns are engaged in a bitter conflict

The conflict began when the leader of the group , Alhaji Kromah sought to replace one of his nominees to the five-man Councillor of State for disobedience to the Whip. Mr. Thomas Ziah voted against Councillor Dr. El Mohamed Sherif, the movement's favorite for the position of State Council Chairman. The post was ultimately won by Professor David Kpomakpor of the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU), due to a two-way split in the voting within Ulimo and IGNU. Both ULIMO and IGNU have two representatives each on the five-member Council of State. Kroma nominated Mr. Dexter Tayor, ULIMO's press coordinator, to replace his fellow Krahn tribesman. Ziah had earlier been elected as one of the vice-chairs of the Council of State and was on the verge of being sworn into office. So deep was the split between Kromah and Zia that fighting erupted between fighters of the two ethnic strands within the movement _ the Mandingos and the Krahns. The incident not only threatened the swearing-in of the members of the Council of State, but also caused renewed fighting in some sectors.

The ECOMOG and UNOMIL officials had not taken into consideration a possible split and fighting within ULIMO in their projection. The result has been a delay in the disarmament process in the areas under the control of ULIMO. Despite the personal intervention of the Sierra Leonean leader, General Strasser, to resolve the internal conflict, the areas controlled by ULIMO in Cape Mount and Bomi Territory have become destabalized.

The Elections Scheduled for September 7, 1994.

The holding of free and fair elections is considered one of the most important steps in the transition process. Democratically held elections, in which Liberians throughout the country and those abroad can freely participate in selecting their representatives are crucial to the establishment of a stable government and a unified country. There is a need for all eligible Liberians to exercise their franchise. It is also important that the elections be free amd fair. they be seen to be free and fair.

In this connection, it is absolutely essenual for the Liberian countryside to be demonstrably free of guns and checkpoints manned by fighters. Steps should be taken to repatriate at least the majority of the multitude of nearly one million Liberians in refuge abroad, out of a total population of approximately three million, before the elections. Those who cannot return in time for the election should be afforded the opportunity of participating in the process. The demarcation of electoral districts and voter registration cannot be undertaken in ernest until the security problem in some of the areas is resolved.

While the aforementioned arguments may be crucial to the holding of the free and fair elections that all Liberians desire, All the parties concerned could still work toward the September 7, 1994 date as a general goal with the understanding that the election date be reviewed in light of any progress that might be made in the disarmament process over the next three months. Should the country succeed in achieving meaningful disarmament in the coming months, followed by a certification by ECOMOG/UOMIL of the safety of the voting areas, a decision could then be taken by the sponsoring powers of the Liberian Peace Process to hold elections around the end of 1994, and the induction of officials early in 1994.

PART II

United States Policy

It is important that The United States be more actively involved in the transitional process, by ensuring that the Cotonou Peace Accord is implemented and adhered to by all the parties involved. As the only super power and giving the nature of its historic ties with Liberia and its current involvement in the process, it could designate a special US Representative for the Liberiai's Transition to Democracy. This individual's role would be to serve as a liason between The United States and all of the African and United Nations Sponsors of the Liberian Transition Process. Hs primary responsibility would be to coordinate US policy on the subject and to ensure the impplementation of the Cotonou Peace Accord.

Such an involvement would send a sstrong and much needed signal to all the parties involved of US determination to achieve an early and peaceful resolution of the Liberian crisis and a smooth return of the country to democratic rule. It would be vviewed very favorably in Liberia and the rest of Africa as a excellent demonstration of America's humanitarian concerns about a small country, with extremely close ties to the United States.

Humanitarian Needs

Humanitarian assistance from the United States during the Liberian crisis has been substantial and Liberians are very grateful for it. Relief and other supplies from the United States and other donors have helped alleviate suffering and enabled civil war Liberia to cope with a myriad, social and health problems. Because the conflict has been so devastating and long, the need for humanitarian assistance continues. For example, humanitarian assistance is needed to improve and upgrade the existing educational and health care delivery system. Assistance is also needed for the re-integration of ex-combatants and refugees and returnees into various communities across the country. Further assistance is needed for the rebuilding of health centers, schools, roads, bridges and rural agricultural projects.

Reconstruction of Post Civil War Liberia

Giving the severity of the Liberian crisis and the magnitude of the attendant devastation the question of how to rebuild Liberia will be a preoccupation of Liberians for decades to come. Despite all of their suffering and trauma, it seems to occur to most Liberians that at some point in the not too distant future the civil war will be over , elections will be held and the enormous task of rebuilding their country will have to be undertaken. In this regard, Liberians recall that an Act of the US Congress of March 7, 1819 created the entity that later became the Republic of Liberia. They appear are hopeful that in view of the ties based on history, culture and kinship that have existed between the United States and Liberia reconstruction assistance and US involvement in the rebuilding of Liberia will be forthcoming.

The Human Rights Issue

Ever since the overthrow of constitutional government in Liberia the issue of safeguarding the human rights of the habitants of the country has loomed large in Liberian society.It is an area in which the United States can establish some clear guidelines. The United States should ensure press for the recognition of a human rights component of the current peace process and in bi lateral relations with Liberia during the years ahead.

In sum, the main focus should now be the dynamics of disarmament and demobilization, deemed a necessary first step toward consolidating the authority of the new Council of State and asserting the territorial unity and security of the state. This would be followed by a repatriation program and the holding of democratic elections. The first and most important step should be the removal of weapons from all of warring factions, their surrogates and other armed groups that have emerged since the signing of the Cotonou Peace Accord. This would then be followed by a program for the reconstruction of the country.

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Dr. Abraham L. James is a Research Fellow in the Department of Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania where he was awarded a doctorate in Comparative Politics and subsequently taught for a year.

Abraham went to Penn from Liberia, his country, where he had served as a professor and chairman of the Department of Government at the University of Liberia. He had also qualified for the Liberian Bar and served as Assistant to the late President William V. S. Tubman.

Prior to that time he attended Saint Catherine's College, Oxford, receiving the Master of Letters in International Law; the Fletcher School of International Affairs, Tufts University receiving the M.A. and M.A.L.D; and the University of Liberia receiving the B.A.

He has traveled extensively in Africa, Asia and Europe and has addressed audiences in various parts of the United States.

Abraham's written works include - The Legal Aspect of the Transfer of Power to Dependent Territories in Africa; The organization of African Unity as a Regional Arrangement Under Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter; Problems of Ethnic Rivalries in Nation Building and Initiating a Process for the Reconstruction of a Small Developing Country.

During the last two years Abraham has devoted much of his time and energy to the current peace efforts in Liberia and the subsequent reconstruction of the country.

U.S. SUPPORT FOR ECOMOG

- The U.S. has committed a total of $30.83m in assistance for the expansion of the ECOMOG peacekeeping operation. This consists of:

  -- $19.83m pledged to the UN Trust Fund for Liberia (mixture of ESF and reprogrammed FMF). Of this, $13.83m has been disbursed as of May 31. These funds have gone towards transport of the Tanzanians and Ugandans to Liberia and basic equipment and supplies for them.

  -- $11m in FY94 PKO funds. These funds have been used to purchase vehicles for the Tanzanians and Ugandans and communications equipment for the expanded ECOMOG operation.

- President Clinton authorized the U.S. funding for the support of the expanded ECOMOG operation. While we would liked to have provided support also for the original peacekeeping forces, funding was insufficient for this purpose.

- However, we have provided $2.6 million out of our overall assistance package to help the original ECOMOG forces meet increased medical, transport, communications, and fuel costs of the expanded operation.

- A substantial portion of the U.S. assistance, both bilaterally and through the Trust Fund, has gone to American firms, e.g. air transport, communications equipment, fuel supplies, and the Humvees.

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